



Riverside County Fire Department

Office of the Fire Marshal

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Guideline

Title: Residentially Based Care Facilities – Group R-3.1 Occupancies		
Guideline: # G08-001	Effective Date: 12/02/2008	Revised Date: 05/19/2017
Code References: 2016 California Building Code, Chapter 4, Section 435		

Purpose:

This information bulletin has been developed to assist providers, development applicants, architects, and contractors in determining the minimum requirements for licensed care facilities housing six or less clients in single family residences.

Scope:

This bulletin is intended to ensure compliance with the appropriate requirements for Group R-3.1 residentially-based care facilities. The regulations regarding residentially based care facilities are found in the 2016 California Building Code (CBC) and 2016 California Fire Code (CFC). Plans not conforming to the requirements listed herein will be returned as incomplete.

Contact Information:

For additional information regarding R-3.1 residential care facilities please contact your local Fire Marshal office.

Occupancy Classification:

R-3.1 Occupancies are residentially-based licensed facilities accommodating six or less regardless of ambulatory status:

- Adult Residential Facilities
- Congregate Living Health Facilities
- Foster Family Homes
- Group Homes
- Intermediate Care Facilities for the Developmentally Disabled, Habilitative
- Intermediate Care Facilities for the Developmentally Disabled, Nursing
- Nurseries for the full time care of children under the age of six, but not including “infants” as defined in CBC Section 202
- Residential Care Facilities for the Elderly
- Small Family Homes
- Residential Care Facilities for the Chronically ill

Submittal Requirements:

Prior to requesting a fire safety inspection, dimensional or scaled site and floor plans shall be submitted to the local Riverside County Fire Department (RCFD) Office of the Fire Marshal for review and approval. Please submit these drawings at least two weeks prior to requesting an inspection. The plans must include the building address, occupancy classification, and the location of engineered sprinkler systems, smoke detectors/alarms, exit doors, landings, ramps, stairways, steps, sidewalks, and gates.

All dimensions must be included. A floor plan showing furniture layout including room locations for staff, ambulatory, non-ambulatory and bedridden clients shall be provided. Aisle widths shall be indicated in the plan even though furniture does not need to be drawn to scale.

Clearly identify all intended uses and operations of the facility.

Furniture shall be in place for the RCFD inspection.

Use this Guideline to ensure that your plans have at least the minimum amount of information required to begin a review. It may be necessary to provide additional information beyond what is requested in this standard depending on the project.

1) Addressing:

- a) Address numbers shall be posted on the building and shall be visible from the street. Said numbers shall contrast with their background. *[Addressing shall be in accordance with Riverside County Fire Department Standard 07-01.]* CFC 505.1

2) Temporary Bedridden:

- a) Clients who become temporarily bedridden may continue to be housed on any story in homes classified as Residential-Care Facilities for the Elderly (RCFE). Every RCFE admitting or retaining a bedridden resident shall, within 48 hours of the resident's admission or retention in the facility, notify the RCFD of the estimated length of time the resident will retain his or her bedridden status in the facility. CBC 435.10

Definition of Temporary: *Reference Health and Safety Code Section 1569.72*

3) Bedridden Locations:

- a) Occupancies classified as Residential Facilities (RF) shall not house bedridden clients above or below the first story. CBC 435.3.2

4) Interior Wall Finish for Bedridden:

- a) Interior wall and ceiling finish in Group R-3.1 housing bedridden clients shall comply with interior wall ceiling finish requirements specified for Group I-2 occupancies in Table 803.11. CBC 435.6.1

5) Sprinklers:

- a) Housing bedridden clients (see CBC 435.8.3.3 for housing only one bedridden client). CBC 903.2.8
- b) Housing non-ambulatory clients above the first floor. CBC 903.2.8
- c) Housing clients above the second floor. CBC 903.2.8

6) Fire Extinguisher

- a) A fire extinguisher with a minimum classification of 2A10BC shall be mounted in a conspicuous and unobstructed location. The top of the extinguisher shall be between three and five feet above finished floor level. The extinguisher shall be serviced by a licensed company and affixed with a tag either every 12 months or immediately after each use. (Title 19, 3.29(d))

7) Fire Alarm Single Pull Station and Bell:

- a) Not required in new R-3.1 occupancy licensed facilities after January 1, 2008

8) Visual Notification Appliances:

- a) Group R-3.1 Protective Social Care Facilities which house persons who are hearing impaired shall be provided with notification appliances for the hearing impaired installed in accordance with NFPA 72 and which shall activate upon initiation of the fire alarm system or the smoke alarms. (CBC Section 907.5.2.3.4)

Definition of Protective Social Care: *The housing and care of any person of any age when such person is referred to or placed within such home or facility for care and supervision services by any governmental agency.*

9) Smoke Alarms:

a) Locations: CBC 907.2.11.2

- i) On ceilings or walls outside of each separate sleeping area in the immediate vicinity of bedrooms.
- ii) In each room used for sleeping purposes.
- iii) In each story within a dwelling unit, including basements but not including crawl spaces and uninhabitable attics. In dwellings or dwelling units with split levels and without an intervening door between the adjacent levels, a smoke alarm installed on the upper level shall suffice for the adjacent lower level provided that the lower level is less than one full story below the upper level.
- iv) In a Group R-3.1 occupancy, in addition to the above, smoke alarms shall be provided throughout the habitable areas of the dwelling unit except kitchens.

b) Group R-3.1 (Bedridden): CFC 907.2.11.2.2

- i) In all facilities housing a bedridden client, smoke alarms shall receive their primary power from the building wiring when such wiring is served from a commercial source and shall be equipped with a battery backup. Smoke alarms shall be electrically interconnected so as to cause all smoke alarms to sound a distinctive alarm signal upon actuation of any single smoke alarm. Such alarm signal shall be audible throughout the facility at a minimum level of 15 db above ambient noise level. These devices need not be interconnected to any other fire alarm device, have a control panel, or be electronically supervised or provided with emergency power.

c) Interconnected: CBC 907.2.11.5

- i) Smoke alarms shall be electrically interconnected so as to cause all smoke alarms to sound a distinctive alarm signal upon actuation of any single smoke alarm.

d) Power Source: CBC 907.2.11.6

- i) In all newly classified Group R-3.1 occupancies, required smoke alarms shall receive their primary power from the building wiring when such wiring is served from a commercial source and shall be equipped with battery backup.

e) dBA Requirements: NFPA 72, 18.4.5.1

- i) Where audible appliances are installed to provide signals for sleeping areas, they shall have a sound level at least 15 dB above the average ambient sound level or 5 dB above the maximum sound level having a duration of at least 60 seconds or a sound level of at least 75 dBA, whichever is greater measured at the pillow level in the occupiable area, using the A-weighted scale (dBA).

10) Carbon Monoxide Alarms

- a) CBC 915 Group R occupancies located in a building containing a fuel-burning appliance or a building that has an attached garage shall be equipped with single station carbon monoxide alarms. The carbon monoxide alarms shall be listed as complying with UL 2034 and shall be installed and maintained in accordance with NFPA 720 and the manufacturer's instructions.

Exceptions:

1. Carbon monoxide detection shall not be required in dwelling units, sleeping units and classrooms where there are no communicating openings between the fuel-burning appliance or fuel-burning fireplace and the dwelling unit, sleeping unit or classroom.
2. Carbon monoxide detection shall not be required in dwelling units, sleeping units and classrooms where carbon monoxide detection is provided in one of the following locations:
 - 2.1. In an approved location between the fuelburning appliance or fuel-burning fireplace and the dwelling unit, sleeping unit or classroom.
 - 2.2. On the ceiling of the room containing the fuel-burning appliance or fuel-burning fireplace.

11) Exit Doors:

- a) Exits shall be 3-feet wide by 6-feet, 8-inches high and provide a 32-inch clear opening. A sliding door may be used as an exit from bedrooms; however, in order to provide a 32-inch clear opening, a 6-foot or larger door will be necessary. CBC 435.8.2

12) Exiting:

- a) *In addition to the general means of egress requirements of Chapter 10* there shall be a minimum of two exits from the dwelling. CBC 435.8.2.1
- b) Exits shall not pass through kitchens, garages, storerooms, or closets and shall not pass through more than one intervening room. CBC 435.8.3.4
- c) Non-Ambulatory Requirements. CBC 435.8.3.2
 - i) Shall conform to **ONE** of the following:
 - (1) Egress through a hallway or area into a bedroom in the immediate area which has an exit directly to the exterior and the corridor / hallway is constructed consistent with the dwelling unit interior walls. The hallway shall be separated from common areas by a solid wood door not less than 1-3/8 inch in thickness, maintained self-closing or shall be automatic closing by actuation of a smoke detector installed in accordance with CBC [716.5.9].
 - (2) An exit that passes through a corridor / hallway serving the sleeping area, which then exits directly to the exterior. The hallway shall be separated from the rest of the house by a wall constructed consistent with the dwelling unit interior and opening protected by a solid wood door not less than 1-3/8 inch in thickness, maintained self-closing or shall be automatic closing by actuation of a smoke detector installed in accordance with CBC [716.5.9].
 - (3) An exit that leads directly from the bedroom to the exterior shall be sized to permit the installation of a door not less than 3 feet in width and not less than 6 feet 8 inches in height. The doors shall be capable of opening at least 90 degrees and so mounted that the clear width of the exit way is not less than 32 inches.
 - (4) An exit that passes through an adjoining bedroom that exits to the exterior. *[No privacy locks on bedroom doors are allowed if the exit path goes through an adjoining bedroom.]*
- d) Building housing only one Bedridden without automatic fire sprinkler protection CBC 435.8.3.3
 - i) Shall conform to **ALL** of the following:
 - (1) A bedridden client shall have a direct exit to the exterior of the residence from the sleeping room.

- (2) Doors to a bedridden client's sleeping room shall be self closing positive latching 1-3/8 inch solid wood door, and shall be provided with a gasket so installed as to provide a seal where the door meets the jam on both sides and across the top. Doors shall be maintained self-closing or shall be automatic closing by actuation of a smoke alarm.
- (3) A bedridden client's sleeping room interior door shall not have a night latch, dead bolt, security chain or any similar locking device installed in accordance with CBC chapter 10.
- (4) The exterior exit door to a bedridden client's sleeping room shall be operable from both the interior and the exterior of the residence.
- (5) Every required exit doorway from a bedridden client's sleeping room shall be not less than 36-inches in width and not less than 6-feet, 8-inches in height. Doors shall be capable of opening at least 90 degrees and shall have a clear width of exit way not less than 32-inches.

13) Intervening Rooms:

- a) A means of exit shall not pass through more than one intervening room. A means of egress shall not pass through kitchens, storerooms, closets, garages or spaces used for similar purposes. CBC 435.8.3.4

Exception: Kitchens that do not form separate rooms by construction.

14) Corridors / Hallways:

- a) Group R-3.1 occupancies shall have 36 inch corridors on floors housing clients. CBC 435.8.4.2

15) Stairways:

- a) Occupancies may continue to use existing stairways (except for winding and spiral stairways which are not permitted as a required means of egress) provided the stairs have a maximum rise of 8-inches (203 mm) with a minimum run of 9-inches (229 mm). The minimum stairway width may be 30-inches (762 mm). CBC 435.8.6.2

16) Floor Separations:

- a) When non-ambulatory clients are housed above the first floor floor separations shall be provided with non-rated smoke partition to prevent smoke travel between floors. Such partitions shall have construction equal to ½ inch gypsum board on one side of wall framing. CBC 435.8.7

Exceptions:

- i) Not required when there is at least one exterior exit from floor occupied by clients.
 - ii) Not required in occupancies provided with automatic fire sprinklers.
- b) Door openings in floor separations shall be protected by 1-3/8 inch solid wood core doors which shall be positive latching, smoke gasketed and self-closing or automatic closing by activation of a smoke detector. CBC 435.8.7.1

17) Garage Separation:

- a) Door openings between a private garage and the dwelling unit shall be equipped with either solid wood doors or solid or honeycomb core steel doors not less than 1³/₈ inches in thickness with a fire protection rating of not less than 20 minutes. Doors shall be self-closing and self-latching. CBC 406.3.4

18) Fences and Gates:

- a) Grounds of residential care for the elderly serving Alzheimer's clients may be fenced and gates therein equipped with locks, provided safe dispersal areas are located not less than 50-feet from the buildings. Dispersal areas shall be sized to provide an area of not less than 3-square feet per occupant. Gates shall not be installed across corridors or passage ways leading to such dispersal areas unless they comply with egress requirements. CBC 435.8.8

19) Change in Level:

- a) Occupancies housing non-ambulatory clients, changes in level up to 0.25-inch may be vertical without edge treatment. Changes in level between 0.25-inch and 0.5-inch shall be beveled with a slope no greater than 1 unit vertical in 2 units horizontal (50 percent slope). Changes in level greater than 0.5-inch shall be accomplished by means of a ramp. CBC 435.8.5

20) Electrical:

- a) Identified electrical hazards shall be abated. Electrical wiring, devices, appliances and other equipment that is modified or damaged and constitutes an electrical shock or fire hazard shall not be used. CFC 605

21) Open Flame:

- a) A person shall not utilize or allow to be utilized, an open flame in R-3.1 occupancies. CFC 308.5

22) Ignition Sources:

- a) Clearance between ignition sources, such as luminaries, heaters, flame-producing devices and combustible materials shall be maintained in an approved manner. CFC 305.1

23) Securing Compressed Gas Containers, Cylinders and Tanks:

- a) Compressed gas containers, cylinders and tanks shall be secured to prevent falling caused by contact, vibration or seismic activity. CFC 5303.5.3

24) Ramps:

If exterior ramps are to be voluntarily provided to accommodate clients and their exiting needs, consult your local Building Official for appropriate permits and inspections prior to installing exterior ramping.