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FIRE PREVENTION BUREAU  
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## STANDARD 14.8.2

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### RESIDENTIAL CARE FACILITIES FOR THE ELDERLY (RCFE) WITH SEVEN OR MORE CLIENTS (GROUP R-2.1 AND R-4 OCCUPANCIES)

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*Please note that the District assumes no liability for any damages incurred directly or indirectly as a result of any errors, omissions, or discrepancies between this standard and any applicable law. It is the sole responsibility of the person or persons conducting any work pursuant to this standard to ensure their work complies with any and all applicable codes, ordinances, and regulations.*

#### CHAPTER 1 ADMINISTRATION

**1.1 Scope.** This standard provides requirements for licensed care facilities known as Licensed Care Facilities for the Elderly with seven or more clients, including assisted living and social rehabilitation facilities.

**1.2 Purpose.** This standard is not all-inclusive of all Code requirements, but is intended as a guide to the State Laws and Codes and local requirements. These requirements are based upon codes in effect as of the date of this standard. The facility operator and the Fire District representative may also use this standard as an inspection guide.

**1.3 Responsibility.** All individuals and companies who intended to engage in the operation of a licensed care facility housing seven or more clients are subject to the requirements of this standard.

**1.4 Permits.** A fire clearance must be obtained on a California State Form 850 and provided to Community Care Licensing prior to operation of any licensed facility.

#### CHAPTER 2 DEFINITIONS

**2.1 General.** The following words and terms shall, for the purposes of this standard and permit requirements of the VCFC, have the meanings shown herein.

**2.2 Group R-2.1 Occupancy.** Facilities housing clients, on a 24-hour basis, who because of age, mental disability or other reasons, live in a supervised residential environment that provides personal care services.

**2.3 Group R-4 Occupancy.** Residential occupancies arranged as residential care/assisted living facilities including more than six (6) ambulatory clients, excluding staff.

**2.4 Bedridden Person.** A person requiring assistance in turning and repositioning in bed, or being unable to independently transfer to and from bed, except in facilities with appropriate and sufficient care

staff, mechanical devices if necessary and safety precautions, as determined in CCR Title 22 regulations, by the Director of Social Services or his or her designated representative.

**2.5 CCR.** California Code of Regulations

**2.6 NFPA.** National Fire Protection Association

**2.7 Non-ambulatory Person.** A person unable to leave a building unassisted under emergency conditions. It includes, but is not limited to, persons who depend on mechanical aids such as crutches, walkers and wheelchairs and any person who is unable to physically and mentally respond to a sensory signal approved by the State Fire Marshal or an oral instruction relating to fire danger.

**2.8 Residential Care Facility for the Elderly (RCFE).** A facility with a housing arrangement chosen voluntarily by persons 60-years of age or over, or their authorized representative, where varying levels and intensities of care and supervision, protective supervision or personal care are provided, based on their varying needs, as determined in order to be admitted and to remain in the facility. Persons under 60-years of age with compatible needs, as determined by the Director of Social Services in regulations, may be allowed to be admitted or retained in a residential-care facility for the elderly.

**2.9 Residential Facility.** A family home, group care facility or similar facility determined by the Director of Social Services, for 24-hour non-medical care of persons in need of personal services, supervision, or assistance essential for sustaining the activities of daily living or for the protection of the individual. Such facilities include small family homes and social rehabilitation facilities.

**2.10 Ventura County Fire Code (VCFC).** The specified portions of the California Building Standards Codes known as California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Part 9, "California Fire Code (CFC)" as adopted by the State Fire Marshal (SFM) and; portions of The International Fire Code (IFC), 2009 Edition referenced by the California Building Standards Code and not adopted or modified by the SFM and; the VCFPD amendments contained in Ordinance 27 to the above-referenced codes.

## CHAPTER 3 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

**3.1 General.** The determination of a client's status as ambulatory, non-ambulatory or bedridden shall be made by the Director of Social Services or his or her designated representative.

**3.2 Temporary Bedridden Clients.** Clients who become temporarily bedridden as defined in Health and Safety Code Section 1569.72 may continue to be housed on any story in Group R-2.1 or R-4 occupancies 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 Ventura County Fire Protection District's Fire Prevention Bureau of the estimated length of time the resident will retain his or her bedridden status in the facility.

**3.3 Pre-Inspection.** The Fire District recommends a pre-inspection of any facility desiring to become licensed as an RCFE or to have bedridden clients and recommends obtaining the services of a licensed architect to review the design and requirements of licensed care. Complete form California LIC 9092 – Fire Pre-Inspection/Consultation Request.

**3.4 New Facilities.** All new R-2.1 and R-4 licensed care facilities will require the submittal of building plans for review and approval by Ventura County Fire Protection District prior to any work being done on the facility. Building plans shall be drawn by a properly licensed architect or engineer.

**3.5 Premises Identification.** Building address numbers shall comply with the following requirements and Fire Prevention Standard 14.4.1.

**3.5.1 Number Size.** Address numbers shall be a minimum of 10-inches in height, 5-inches in width and have a minimum stroke width of 1-inch.

**3.5.2 Number Color.** Address numbers shall be contrasting in color to their background. Brass or metallic finishes are not permitted.

**3.5.3 Number Location.** Address numbers shall be located on the building and readily visible from the street. This may require numbers to be installed in more than one location.

**3.5.4 Unit Numbers.** Unit numbers shall be provided above or adjacent to the entrance door to each unit. Numbers shall be a minimum of 4-inches in height, 2-inches in width and have a minimum stroke width of 1/2-inch.

**3.6 Address Directories.** Address maps shall be provided at every street entrance into multi-building complexes. See Fire Prevention Standard 14.4.1 for details.

**3.7 Fire Extinguishers.** Provide type 2A:10B-C fire extinguishers in a visible and accessible location.

**3.7.1 Fire Extinguisher Mounting.** Fire extinguishers shall be mounted with the top no higher than 44-inches from floor level.

**3.7.2 Fire Extinguisher Spacing.** Fire extinguishers shall be provided within 75 feet of travel distance.

**3.7.3 Fire Extinguisher Servicing.** Fire extinguishers shall be serviced by a licensed contractor annually and after each use. Extinguishers shall have a current California State Fire Marshal's Certification Tag.

**3.8 Knox Systems.** A Knox key switch, padlock or box shall be provided at all secured entry/exit doors. Mounting locations shall be approved by the Fire District. See Fire Prevention Knox Policy #13107

**3.9 Drapes & Decorative Materials.** All drapes, hangings, curtains, drops and all other decorative material including Christmas trees, that would tend to increase the fire and panic hazard shall be made from a nonflammable material, or shall be treated and maintained in a flame-retardant condition by means of a flame-retardant solution or process approved by the State Fire Marshal, as set forth in Subchapter 8, Chapter 1, Title 19 CCR. Exits, exit lights and fire extinguisher locations shall not be concealed, in whole or in part, by any decorative material.

**3.10 Storage of Materials.** No person shall place, store or keep any materials that would obstruct or render an exit unusable or hazardous. Storage shall comply with the following:

- (1) Storage shall not be permitted below stairways
- (2) Storage shall be a minimum of 18-inches below fire sprinkler head deflectors.
- (3) Storage shall be a minimum of 2-feet below the ceiling in non-sprinklered buildings.
- (4) Storage shall be a minimum of 36-inches from the front, 30-inches from the sides and 72-inches in height from any electrical panel(s). Direct access to the panel(s) shall be maintained at all times.

**3.11 Trash Containers.** Commercial trash containers or dumpsters shall not be stored or placed within five (5) feet of combustible walls, openings or combustible roof eave-lines unless the area is protected by an approved automatic fire sprinkler system.

**3.12 Fire Lanes.** All required fire lanes shall be posted in accordance with Fire Prevention Standard 14.6.6. All fire lane markings shall be re-marked as necessary so they are clearly visible at all times.

## CHAPTER 4 BUILDING CONSTRUCTION

**4.1 Building Construction.** Buildings housing non-ambulatory clients shall comply with the special requirements of California Health and Safety Code 13131.5. These requirements supersede the California Building Code.

**4.1.1 Non-ambulatory Clients Below the Third Story.** Buildings housing non-ambulatory clients on the first and second stories shall be a minimum of Type V-A construction, with a 1-hour fire resistance rating throughout the building.

**4.1.2 Non-ambulatory Clients Above the Second Story.** Buildings housing non-ambulatory clients on the third, fourth and fifth stories shall be a minimum of Type I-B construction (Type II-FR for pre-2008 facilities).

**4.1.3 R-2.1 Occupancies Housing Bedridden Clients.** R-2.1 occupancies housing bedridden clients shall be provided with a 1-hour fire resistance rating. Smoke barriers shall comply with the construction requirements of the California Building Code.

**4.2 Occupancy Separation.** One-hour separation shall be provided for laundry rooms, boiler rooms, central heating plants and/or hot-water boilers. All openings shall be protected by a one-hour fire-rated assembly.

**4.3 Maintenance.** All required fire-resistive construction and fire-rated doors within the facility shall be maintained in accordance with the California Building Code (CBC).

## CHAPTER 5 GENERAL EGRESS REQUIREMENTS

**5.1 General.** All egress components shall comply with CBC Chapter 10.

**5.2 Exit Discharge.** The exit discharge shall provide a direct and unobstructed access to the public way (street). Sidewalks and pathways shall be minimum 36-inches wide and be paved or concrete.

**5.3 Exit Corridors.** Exit corridors shall have a minimum width as follows:

- (1) R-2.1 occupancies shall have a minimum corridor width of 60-inches when serving non-ambulatory clients and 44-inches when serving only ambulatory clients.
- (2) R-4 occupancies shall have a minimum corridor width of 44-inches. Corridor widths may be reduced to 36-inches when serving 10 or less occupants or serving 49 or less ambulatory only clients.

**5.4 Intervening Rooms.** Exits shall not pass through kitchens, store rooms, laundry rooms, closets or spaces used for similar purposes.

**5.5 Emergency Escape and Rescue Windows.** Emergency escape and rescue windows shall be provided in accordance with CBC Section 1026. Sufficient exterior space shall be provided outside these windows to allow for fire department ladder operations.

**5.6 Elevation Changes.** Ramps shall be provided from exits when the change in elevation is greater than 1/2-inch. Changes between 1/4-inch to 1/2-inch shall be beveled. Changes in level up to 1/4-inch do not require edge treatment. Obtain building permits and final approval from Building and Safety for repairs, alterations and improvements.

**5.7 Self-Closing Doors.** Required self-closing doors shall not be blocked open or impaired in any manner. These include, but not limited to, doors in enclosed exit stairways, fire rated corridors and smoke barrier doors. Use of approved hold-open devices is acceptable.

**5.8 Hold Open Devices.** Magnetic hold-open devices are approved for use on required self-closing doors and must meet the following:

- (1) There shall be a smoke detector installed on each side of the door.
- (2) Actuation of either smoke detector shall release the door.
- (3) Doors shall release on loss of power to the smoke detectors or hold-open device.
- (4) The door shall begin to close no longer than 10 seconds after the actuation of a smoke detector or loss of power.

**5.9 Exit Obstructions.** Obstructions, including storage and furniture, shall not be placed in the required width of an exit, except projections permitted by the Building Code and Fire Code Officials.

**5.10 Emergency Evacuation Plans and Information.** The building emergency procedures shall comply with CCR Title 19 and the following:

- (1) Exit plans shall be posted on each floor level and in each stairwell.
- (2) An explanation of the fire alarm system shall be posted.
- (3) Each occupied unit shall be provided with an exit plan.
- (4) Emergency evacuation plans shall show the locations of fire extinguishers.

## **CHAPTER 6 EXIT DOORS AND GATES**

**6.1 Exit Doors.** All exit doors shall comply with the requirements set forth in Chapter 10 and Section 425 of the California Building Code.

**6.1.1 Exit Door Width.** Doors used as exits shall be a minimum of 36-inches wide, with a minimum clear opening width of 32-inches.

**6.1.2 Exit Door Operation.** Doors used as exits shall open from the inside without the use of a key or any special knowledge or effort. Exception: Individual dwelling and sleeping units.

**6.2 Sliding Glass Doors.** Sliding glass doors used as exits within dwelling and sleeping units shall have only the "latch-type" lock on the handle. Remove or disable all other types of locks. Screen doors shall be maintained and open without difficulty.

**6.3 Panic Hardware.** Where panic hardware is installed, it shall meet the following requirements.

**6.3.1 Releasing Device.** The actuation portion of the releasing device shall extend at least one-half the door leaf width.

**6.3.2 Unlatching Force.** The maximum unlatching force shall not exceed 15-pounds.

**6.3.3 Mounting Height.** Panic hardware shall be installed 34 inches minimum and 48 inches maximum above the finished floor.

**6.4 Special Egress Devices.** When approved, licensed care facilities may be equipped with approved and listed special egress-control devices of the time-delay type. Such devices shall conform to the following requirements:

- (1) The egress control device shall automatically unlock upon activation of either the fire sprinkler system or smoke detection system.
- (2) The egress control device shall automatically unlock upon loss of power to any one of the following: the egress control device, the smoke detection system or the means of egress illumination as required by the CBC Chapter 10.
- (3) The egress control device shall be capable of being unlocked by a signal from a switch located in an approved location.
- (4) An irreversible process that will deactivate the egress control device shall be initiated whenever a manual force of not more than 15-pounds of pressure is applied for two (2) seconds to the panic hardware or other door latching hardware. The egress control device shall deactivate within an approved time period not to exceed 15 seconds. The time delay established for each egress control device shall be field adjustable.
- (5) Actuation of the panic hardware or other door latching hardware shall activate an audible signal at the door.
- (6) A sign shall be provided on the door located above or within 12-inches of the panic hardware or other door latching hardware reading: **"KEEP PUSHING. THIS DOOR WILL OPEN IN [15] SECONDS. ALARM WILL SOUND."** Sign lettering shall be a minimum 1-inch in height and shall have a stroke of not less than 1/8-inch.
- (7) Regardless of the means of deactivation, relocking of the egress control device shall be by manual means only at the door.

**6.5 Exit Gates.** Gates installed across an exit shall be of sufficient size capable of opening so that the clear width is not less than 32-inches and shall open in the direction of travel.

**6.5.1 Gate Locks.** Gates installed across an exit shall not be locked, chained, bolted, barred, latched or otherwise rendered unusable at times when the building or area served by the exit is occupied. All gates shall open without the use of a key or any special knowledge or effort.

## **CHAPTER 7 EGRESS IDENTIFICATION AND ILLUMINATION**

**7.1 General.** Exit signs and all means of egress aisles, hallways, corridors and exits shall be illuminated at all times.

**7.2 Secondary Power Source.** A secondary source of power for exit signage and emergency lighting shall be provided. The secondary source is typically provided from battery back-up or a generator.

**7.2.1 Testing.** Secondary power sources shall be tested at least monthly.

**7.3 Floor Level Exit Signs/Path Marking.** Floor level exit signs or path marking shall be provided in all interior corridors of R-2.1 and R-4 occupancies.

**7.4 Tactile Exit Signs.** Tactile exit signs shall be provided in accordance with CBC 1011.3.

## **CHAPTER 8 SMOKE ALARMS AND CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS**

**8.1 Smoke Alarms.** All dwelling and sleeping units shall be provided with smoke alarms installed in accordance with their listing.

**8.1.2 Power Source.** Smoke alarms shall receive their power from the building wiring and shall be equipped with a battery back-up. When smoke alarms are connected to an emergency electrical system, battery back-up is not required.

**8.1.3 Interconnect Alarms.** Smoke alarms shall be electrically interconnected so that all alarms sound in the dwelling units upon actuation of any single alarm.

**8.2 Carbon Monoxide Alarms.** Carbon monoxide alarms are required in all dwelling and sleeping units having a fossil fuel burning heater or appliance, fireplace, or attached garage. Alarms shall be installed in accordance with their listing.

**8.2.1 Power Source.** Carbon monoxide alarms shall receive their power from the building wiring and shall be equipped with a battery back-up.

**8.2.2 Approved Device.** Carbon monoxide alarms shall be approved and listed by the California State Fire Marshal. Carbon monoxide alarms may be combined with smoke alarms if the device meets the State Fire Marshal's approval.

## **CHAPTER 9 FIRE ALARMS**

**9.1 General.** An approved manual and automatic fire alarm system is required in accordance with Section 907 of the California Building Code and Fire Prevention Standard 14.7.3.

**9.2 Audibility.** The fire alarm must be audible throughout the entire facility.

**9.3 Visible Notification.** All dwelling units in Group R-2.1 and R-4 occupancies required by Section 907 of the 2010 Ventura County Fire Code to have a fire alarm system shall be provided with visible alarm notification appliances activated by both the in-room smoke alarm and the building fire alarm system.

**9.4 Plans.** Fire alarm plans shall be submitted in accordance with Fire Prevention Standard 14.7.3.

## **CHAPTER 10 FIRE SPRINKLER SYSTEMS**

**10.1 General.** Fire sprinkler systems shall be provided as required by VCFC and NFPA 13.

**10.2 Servicing.** Systems shall be serviced in accordance with NFPA 13 and Fire Prevention Standard 14.7.2.

**10.3 Certification.** All fire sprinkler systems shall be certified by a licensed C-16 contractor every five (5) years in accordance with NFPA 25.

**10.4 Obstructions.** A minimum of 18-inches clear space shall be maintained below the fire sprinkler deflector.

## CHAPTER 11 FIXED HOOD EXTINGUISHING SYSTEMS

- 11.1 General.** As of December 31, 2008, all extinguishing systems shall comply with UL 300.
- 11.2 Servicing.** All systems shall be serviced every six (6) months or after activation of the system. A current California State Fire Marshal Certification Tag shall be attached to the system.
- 11.3 Fusible Links.** Fusible links shall be replaced annually or after activation of the system.
- 11.4 Appliances.** Nozzle selection and placement is based on the appliance being protected. Appliances shall not be moved without redesign and approval of the system.
- 11.5 Manual Pull Station.** The manual pull station shall be accessible at all times.
- 11.6 Fire Extinguisher.** A class K fire extinguisher shall be installed in proximity to the hood system.

## CHAPTER 12 INSPECTIONS

- 12.1 General.** Facility inspections are required on an annual basis and anytime there is an issuance of a new license.
- 12.2 Responsibility.** It is the responsibility of the facility owner, or their designated representative, to be on-site during the inspection. Failure to do so will result in the cancellation of the inspection and fees will still be charged.
- 12.3 Inspection Fees.** Appropriate fees can be found in the Ventura County Fire Protection District's Fee Schedule at <http://fire.countyofventura.org> or by calling the Fire Prevention Counter at (805)389-9738. Fees can be paid by check/money order, Visa or MasterCard. All fees shall be paid prior to the completion of the inspection.
- 12.4 Inspection requests.** Inspection requests can only be taken from the facility owner or their designated representative. Inspections shall be requested Monday through Friday prior to 3:00 p.m.
- 12.5 Inspection Schedule.** An Inspector from the Ventura County Fire Prevention Bureau will contact the facility owner or their designated representative to schedule the facility inspection.
- 12.6 Schedule by phone.** Call (805) 389-9744 for scheduling an inspection. The inspection request line is open Monday through Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.
- 12.7 Schedule by fax.** Inspections can be scheduled via fax at (805) 388-4356. Ventura County Fire Prevention Bureau Form FP13.1.3, found at <http://fire.countyofventura.org>, must be used to request inspections. Faxed inspection requests must be received prior to 3:00 p.m.
- 12.8 Contact Information.** Be sure to leave your phone number, when you schedule an inspection by phone or fax, where the inspector can call you back to schedule your inspection date and time.