



**Fort Bend County
Fire Marshal's Office**

ASSISTED LIVING AND RESIDENTIAL CARE FACILITIES GUIDELINE

PURPOSE

The following guideline is intended to ensure compliance with the appropriate requirements for assisted living and residential care facilities. The regulations regarding assisted living and residential care facilities are found in the Texas Administrative Code (TAC), Part 1, Chapter 92, Subchapter A, as well as the 2012 International Fire Code (IFC), 2012 International Building Code (IBC), and Fort Bend County Regulations. The Fire Marshal's Office will return plans not conforming to the requirements listed herein as incomplete.

SCOPE

This guideline is intended to provide the minimum requirements necessary for review and approval of licensed care facilities located within the jurisdiction of Fort Bend County. Permits shall be secured from the Fire Marshal's Office as required for any structural, modifications. Upon approval, a Fort Bend County Fire Certificate of Compliance will be signed and forwarded to the licensing agency.

SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

Prior to beginning any construction, building modifications, or occupancy of the structure, site and architectural plans shall be submitted to Fort Bend County Fire Marshal Office. Submittals shall include two (2) hard-copy sets. Submittals shall be drawn to scale, be of adequate size, and be legible. Hand-drawn submissions are discouraged, but will be reviewed if deemed legible by the building and fire officials. Plans are typically reviewed within 10 business days. All dimensions must be included. A floor plan showing furniture layout shall be provided for each client bedroom. Aisle widths shall be indicated on the plan even though furniture does not need to be drawn to scale. Furniture shall be in place for the final fire inspection. Plans for fire protection systems (sprinkler, fire alarm, kitchen hood) shall be submitted separately and directly to the Fire Marshal's Office. Plans shall be submitted prior to any work being done on the systems. Fire protection systems require submittals SEPARATE from site and architectural submittals. Approval of architectural plans which include fire protection systems does not indicate approval of the included systems. Construction documents shall be prepared by a registered design professional.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

Use this guideline to ensure that your plans have at least the minimum amount of information required to begin a review. These are minimum requirements and should not be viewed as all-encompassing. It may be necessary to provide additional information beyond what is initially requested in this guideline, depending on the project.

- a) Address numbers shall be posted on the building and shall be visible from the street or road fronting the property. These numbers shall contrast with their background. Numbers shall be a minimum of 4 inches high with a minimum stroke width of 0.5 inch. (2012 IFC: 505.1).
- b) There shall be a minimum of two (2) exits from the building. (2012 IFC: 1007.1). Exits shall provide a clear width of not less than 32 inches. (2012 IFC: 1008.1.1).
- c) The means of egress, including the exit discharge, shall be illuminated at all times the building space served by the means of egress is occupied. (2012 IFC: 1006.1). The emergency power system shall provide power for a duration of not less than 90 minutes. (2012 IFC: 1006.3).
- d) Exits and exit access doors shall be marked by an approved exit sign readily visible from any direction of egress travel. (2012 IFC: 1011.1). Exit signs shall be internally or externally illuminated. (2012 IFC: 1011.3). Exit signs shall be illuminated at all times. In case of power loss, continued illumination for a duration of 90 minutes is required. (2012 IFC: 1011.6.3).
- e) Corridors and hallways on floors serving clients shall be a minimum of 36 inches in width. No bed, chair, equipment, storage materials or any other item shall be placed in a manner that would block or obstruct the required width of any corridor, hallway, door or exit path. (2009 IFC: 1018.2).
- f) A fire extinguisher with a minimum classification of 2A:10BC shall be required for every 75 feet of travel distance. (2012 IFC: 906.3). Extinguishers shall be mounted in a conspicuous and unobstructed location. (2012 IFC: 906.5 and 906.6). Extinguishers shall be installed so that its top is not more than 5 feet above the floor, and its bottom is not less than 4 inches from the floor. (2012 IFC: 906.9.1 and 906.9.3). A current service tag shall be attached to the fire extinguisher at all times.
- g) An NFPA 13 compliant automatic sprinkler system shall be provided throughout buildings with a Group I fire area (2012 IFC: 903.2.6). An NFPA 13R compliant automatic sprinkler system shall be provided throughout all buildings with a Group R fire area (2012 IFC: 903.2.8).
- h) Fire alarm and detection systems shall be provided whether the occupancy is a Group I or Group R classification. (2012 IFC: 907.2.6 and 907.2.10).
- i) A Type I hood with fire suppression system shall be installed at or above all commercial cooking appliances and domestic cooking appliances used for commercial purposes that produce grease vapors. (2012 IFC: 609.2).

OCCUPANCY CLASSIFICATIONS

TAC Rule 92.3 Types of Assisted Living Facilities

In a Type A facility, a resident:

- Must be physically and mentally capable of evacuating the facility without physical assistance from staff, which may include an individual who is mobile, although non-ambulatory, such as an individual who uses a wheelchair or an electric cart, and has the capacity to transfer and evacuate himself or herself in an emergency;
- Does not require routine maintenance during nighttime sleeping hours; and
- Must be capable of following directions under emergency conditions.

In a Type B facility, a resident may:

- Require staff assistance to evacuate
- Require attendance during nighttime sleeping hours
- Be incapable of following directions under emergency conditions; and
- Require assistance in transferring to and from a wheelchair, but must not be permanently bedfast

2012 IFC 202 Definitions: Group I-1 (Amended). This occupancy shall include buildings, structures or parts thereof housing more than 16 persons, 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. The occupants are capable of responding to an emergency situation without physical assistance from staff. This group shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Alcohol and drug centers
- “Type A” Large assisted living facilities
- Congregate care facilities
- Convalescent facilities
- Group homes Halfway houses
- Residential board and care facilities
- Social rehabilitation facilities

A facility such as the above with five or fewer persons shall be classified as a Group R-3 or shall comply with the International Residential Code in accordance with Section 101.2. A facility such as above, housing at least six and not more than 16 persons, shall be classified as Group R-4. An assisted living facility classified as a Group I-1, R-3 or R-4 under this section may retain an occupant that has ceased to be capable of self-preservation if the facility has obtained an evacuation waiver for the occupant from the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services in accordance with TAC Rule 92.41 and the department’s aging in place policies. A copy of the evacuation waiver shall be made available to the Fire Marshal on demand. A facility shall not be reclassified as a Group I-2 occupancy due to the loss of self-preservation capacity by an occupant covered by an evacuation waiver.

2012 IFC 202 Definitions: Group I-2 (Amended). This occupancy shall include buildings and structures used for medical, surgical, psychiatric, nursing or custodial care on a 24-hour basis of more than five persons who are not capable of self- preservation. This group shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- “Type B” assisted living facilities
- Child care facilities
- Detoxification facilities
- Hospitals
- Mental hospitals Nursing homes

2012 IFC 202 Definitions: Group R-4 (Amended). Residential occupancies shall include buildings arranged for occupancy as a “Type A” Small assisted living facility or other residential care facilities including more than five but not more than 16 occupants, excluding staff. Group R-4 occupancies shall meet the requirements for construction as defined for Group R-3, except as otherwise provided for in this code or shall comply with the International Residential Code provided the building is protected by an automatic sprinkler system installed in accordance with IFC Section 903.2.8.

DEFINITIONS

ASSISTED LIVING FACILITIES (Amended). Assisted living facilities are those facilities that are subject to licensing and regulation by the Health and Human Services (HHS) pursuant to Texas Health and Safety Code Chapter 247. Assisted living facilities are classified according to the number of residents and their ability to respond to an emergency. The classifications are as follows:

- “Type A”
All residents are capable of evacuating the facility without assistance from staff. “Type A” facilities are sub-classified as Large or Small facilities. Small facilities are those licensed for 16 or fewer residents. Large facilities are those licensed for 17 or more residents.
- “Type B”
Residents may be incapable of evacuating the facility without assistance from staff. “Type B” facilities are sub-classified as Large or Small facilities. Small facilities are those licensed for 16 or fewer residents. Large facilities are those licensed for 17 or more residents.

CHILD CARE FACILITIES. Facilities that provide care on a 24-hour basis to more than five children, 2 ½ years of age or less.

DETOXIFICATION FACILITIES. Facilities that serve patients who are provided treatment for substance abuse on a 24- hour basis and who are incapable of self-preservation or who are harmful to themselves or others.

HOSPITALS AND MENTAL HOSPITALS. Buildings or portions thereof used on a 24-hour basis for the medical, psychiatric, obstetrical or surgical treatment of inpatients who are incapable of self-preservation.

NURSING HOMES. Nursing homes are long-term care facilities on a 24-hour basis, including both intermediate care facilities and skilled nursing facilities, serving more than five persons and any of the persons are incapable of self- preservation.

RESIDENTIAL CARE FACILITIES (Amended). A building or part thereof housing persons, on a 24-hour basis, who because of age, mental disability or other reasons, live in a supervised residential environment which provides personal care services. The occupants are capable of responding to an emergency situation without physical assistance from staff.

This classification shall include, but is not limited to, the following: residential board and care facilities, halfway houses, group homes, congregate care facilities, social rehabilitation facilities, alcohol and drug abuse centers and convalescent facilities. The term includes “Type A” Small assisted living facilities, but does not include Large “Type A” facilities or “Type B” assisted living facilities of either the Large or Small classification.

COMMERCIAL COOKING APPLIANCES. Appliances used in a commercial food service establishment for heating or cooking food and which produce grease vapors, steam, fumes, smoke or odors that are required to be removed through a local exhaust ventilation system. Such appliances include deep fat fryers; upright broilers; griddles; broilers; steam- jacketed kettles; hot-top ranges; under-fired broilers (charbroilers); ovens; barbeques; rotisseries; and similar appliances. For the purpose of this definition, a food service establishment shall include any building or a portion thereof used for the preparation and serving of food.