



CHANGES TO THE LIFE SAFETY CODE BENEFIT HEALTHCARE

The 2012 edition of NFPA 101 “Life Safety Code” incorporates changes that the chairman for the technical committee responsible for the “code” says is a move to make these facilities more home-like and reflect the use of electronic charting and recordkeeping. Other changes have been made to the “code” that affects other types of occupancies, but this article outlines the changes for healthcare.

The person who is responsible for Life Safety at the facility is encouraged to contact the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) to see if they have adopted the 2012 version and can you take advantage of the changes. The AHJ is usually the local Fire Department Fire Prevention Bureau, but this could be a department within the municipal government. Check with the person who did the last life safety inspection or issued the Certificate of Occupancy.

The following information will focus on existing occupancies or facilities instead of new construction.

Chapter 17 – Day Care Occupancies (Adult or Child)

17.2.2.2.3.1 Allows delayed-egress locking systems if the facility has sprinklers lock releases with signals or detection and power failure, and there is emergency lighting on the exit side.

17.2.2.2.4 Requires that door latches in closets, kitchens, storage areas, etc. can be opened by the clients from the inside.

17.2.4.1 Allows for changes to the number of exits and exit access, but the requirements that must be met are too numerous for this article. Please check with the AHJ if you need to make changes to the exits and access.

16.6.3.4.5 Requires Carbon Monoxide detectors if there is fuel-fired equipment and attached enclosed parking when clients sleep at the facility. This is for new construction or new businesses, but is included as a Best Practice.

Chapter 19 – Health Care Occupancies

19.2.3.4(2) allows for projections into the corridor as long as the corridor is at least 6 feet wide, the object does not project more than 6 inches into the corridor, and it must be at least 38 inches off the floor. This will allow for electronic charting stations in the hallway.

19.2.3.4(4) allows for wheeled equipment to be in the corridor as long as the equipment does not reduce the clear unobstructed width to less than 5 feet and the emergency action plan addresses moving the equipment in an emergency. The equipment is limited to equipment carts in use, medical emergency carts not in use, and patient lift or transport equipment.



Chapter 19 – Health Care Occupancies (continued)

19.2.3.4(5) allows for fixed furniture in corridors as long as the corridor is at least 8 feet wide, the furniture is securely attached to the floor or wall, at least 6 feet is maintained clear, the furniture is only on one side, the groupings of furniture do not take up more than 50 square feet, the groupings are separated by at least 10 feet, does not obstruct fire protection equipment, and the area is protected by supervised smoke detection and sprinklers.

19.2.5.7.2.1 Allows for one of the two required exits from health care suites to be an exit stair, exit passageway, or exit to the exterior.

19.2.5.7.2.3 Increases the size of sleeping suite maximums to 7,500 or 10,000 square feet depending on automatic smoke detection, supervised sprinkler system, and direct visual supervision.

19.3.2.5 Allows for changes to cooking facilities preparing meals for 30 or fewer people. There are many changes intended to make these facilities more home-like by allowing them to be more open, but providing for timed shut-off of heating equipment.

19.5.2.3 allows for direct-vent gas fireplaces along as it is not in the bedroom, the area is fully sprinklered, and there is carbon monoxide detection.

19.7.5.6 Allows for flame-retardant decorations, but limits the percentage of the wall, ceiling, & door space (20%, 30%, or 50%) depending on the level of supervision of the sprinkler and smoke detection.

Changes were also made to other parts of the Standard not specific to Health Care that the person in charge of facility maintenance or life safety may encounter during the next inspection by the AHJ if the 2012 edition has been adopted. Changes include:

- ✓ Fire Alarm System Protection – 9.6.1.8.1
- ✓ Elevators for Occupant-Controlled Evacuation – 7.14
- ✓ Exit Enclosure Membrane Penetrations – 7.1.3.2.1
- ✓ Panic/Fire Exit Hardware – 7.2.1.7.2
- ✓ Door Locking/Latching – 7.2.1.5
- ✓ Inspection of Door Openings – 7.2.1.15

Check with the AHJ before making any changes and reference the individual section numbers provided.

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