

North County Fire Protection District

Fire Prevention Bureau

Residential-based Care Facility

R-3.1 Guideline



Approved and Authorized By:

Dominic Fieri, Fire Marshal

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Residential-based Care Facilities R-3.1 Guideline

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 California Building Code (CBC) and California Fire Code (CFC). Plans not conforming to the requirements listed herein will be returned as incomplete.

Occupancy Classification

R-3.1 Occupancies are residentially-based licensed facilities accommodating *six or less clients, regardless of ambulatory status* such as:

- 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

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 guideline depending on the project.

Prior to requesting a fire safety inspection, dimensional or scaled site and floor plans must be submitted to the North County Fire Protection District Fire Prevention Bureau at 330 S. Main Ave. Fallbrook, CA 92028 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 must be provided.

Aisle widths must 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 must be in place at the time of the fire inspection.

Helpful Definitions:

Ambulatory: Able to walk and not bedridden.

Non Ambulatory: Persons 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.

Bedridden: 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 Title 22 regulations, by the Director of Social Services or his or her designated representative. Persons who are unable to independently transfer to and from bed, but who do not need assistance to turn or reposition in bed, shall be considered non ambulatory.

Temporarily Bedridden: Reference Health and Safety Code Section 1569.72

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. CFC 202

1) Addressing:

a) Address numbers must be posted on the building and must be visible from the street. Said numbers must contrast with their background. [Addressing must be in accordance with the County of San Diego Consolidated Fire Code]. 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 must, within 48 hours of the resident's admission or retention in the facility, notify the NCFPD of the estimated length of time the resident will retain his or her bedridden status in the facility. CBC 435.10

3) Bedridden Locations:

a) Occupancies classified as Residential Facilities (RF) must 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 must comply with interior wall ceiling finish requirements specified for Group I-2 occupancies in Table 803.9. CBC 435.6.1

5) Fire Sprinklers Must Be Installed If:

- a) Housing more than one bedridden client CFC 903.2.8
- b) Housing non-ambulatory clients above the first floor. CFC 903.2.8
- c) Housing clients above the second floor. CFC 903.2.8

6) Fire Extinguishers:

a) A fire extinguisher with a minimum classification of 2A:10B:C must be mounted in a conspicuous and unobstructed location. The top of the extinguisher must be between three and five feet above finished floor level. The extinguisher must 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) No longer required.

8) Visual Notification Appliances:

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

9) Smoke Alarms:

a) Locations: CFC 907.2.10.2

- 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 must 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 must be provided throughout the habitable areas of the dwelling unit except kitchens.

b) When housing a Bedridden client(s): CFC 907.2.10.2.3

- i) In all facilities housing a bedridden client, smoke alarms must receive their primary power from the building wiring when such wiring is served from a commercial source and must be equipped with a battery backup. Smoke alarms must 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 signals must 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) Power Source: CFC 907.2.11.6

- i) Smoke alarms must receive their primary power from the building wiring when such wiring is served from a commercial source and must be equipped with battery backup.

d) Interconnected: CBC 907.2.11.5

- i) Smoke alarms must be interconnected in such a manner as to ensure that the activation of one alarm will activate all of the alarms in the individual unit. The alarm must be clearly audible in all bedrooms over background noise levels with all intervening doors closed.

10) Carbon Monoxide Alarms

- a) A building containing a fuel burning appliance or a building that has an attached garage must be equipped with single station carbon monoxide alarms directly outside of each sleeping room. The carbon monoxide alarms must be listed as complying with UL 2034 and must be installed and maintained in accordance with NFPA 720 and the manufacturer's instructions. CFC 915

Exception: Sleeping units or dwelling units that do not themselves contain a fuel-burning appliance or have an attached garage, but that are located in a building with a fuel-burning appliance or an attached garage, need not be provided with single station carbon monoxide alarms provided that:

- i) The sleeping unit or dwelling unit is located more than one story above or below any story that contains a fuel-burning appliance or an attached garage; and
- ii) The sleeping unit or dwelling unit is not connected by duct work or ventilation shafts to any room containing a fuel-burning appliance or to an attached garage; and
- iii) The building is equipped with a common area carbon monoxide detection system that includes all enclosed common area spaces.

11) Exit Doors:

- a) Exits must 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 wide or larger door will be necessary. CBC 435.8.3

12) Exiting:

- a) In addition to the general means of egress requirements of Chapter 10 there must be a minimum of two exits from the dwelling. CBC 435.8.2.1
- b) A means of exit must 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 which do not form separate rooms by construction. CBC 435.8.3.4

- c) Non-Ambulatory Requirements. CBC 435.8.3.2

- i) must conform to **ONE** of the following: (see diagrams at end of guide)
 - (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 must be separated from common areas by a solid wood door not less than $1\frac{3}{8}$ inch in thickness, maintained self-closing or must 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 must 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 $1\frac{3}{8}$ inch in thickness, maintained self-closing or must automatically close 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 must 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 must 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) must conform to **ALL** of the following:

(1) A bedridden client must have a direct exit to the exterior of the residence from the sleeping room.

(2) Doors to a bedridden client's sleeping room must be self closing positive latching 1 $\frac{3}{8}$ inch solid wood door, and must 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 must be maintained self-closing or must be automatic closing by actuation of a smoke alarm.

(3) A bedridden client's sleeping room interior door must 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 must be operable from both the interior and the exterior of the residence.

(5) Every required exit doorway from a bedridden client's sleeping room must be not less than 3 feet in width and not less than 6 feet, 8 inches in height. Doors must be capable of opening at least 90 degrees and must have a clear width of exit way not less than 32 inches.

13) Corridors/Hallways:

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

14) 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 must 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 must be accomplished by means of a ramp. CBC 435.8.5

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 with a minimum run of 9 inches. The minimum stairway width may be 30 inches. CBC 435.8.6.2

16) Floor Separations:

a) Houses with non-ambulatory clients housed above the first floor must be provided with a non-fire resistance constructed floor separation at stairs which will prevent smoke migration between floors. They must have equivalent construction of 0.5 inch gypsum wallboard on one side of the wall framing. CBC 435.8.7

Exceptions:

i) Not required when there is at least one exterior exit from the floor occupied by clients.

ii) Not required in occupancies provided with automatic fire sprinklers.

b) Door openings in floor separations must be protected by 1 $\frac{3}{8}$ inch solid wood core doors which must 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 must be equipped with either solid wood doors or solid or honeycomb core steel doors not less than 1 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches in thickness, or doors in compliance with Section 716.2.2.1 with a fire protection rating of not less than 20 minutes. Doors must be self-closing and self-latching. CBC 406.3.2.1

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 must be sized to provide an area of not less than 3 square feet per occupant. Gates must not be installed across corridors or passageways leading to such dispersal areas unless they comply with egress requirements. CBC 435.8.8

19) Electrical:

a) Identified electrical hazards must be abated. Electrical wiring, devices, appliances and other equipment that is modified or damaged and constitutes an electrical shock or fire hazard must not be used. CFC 604.1

20) Open Flame:

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

21) Ignition Sources:

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

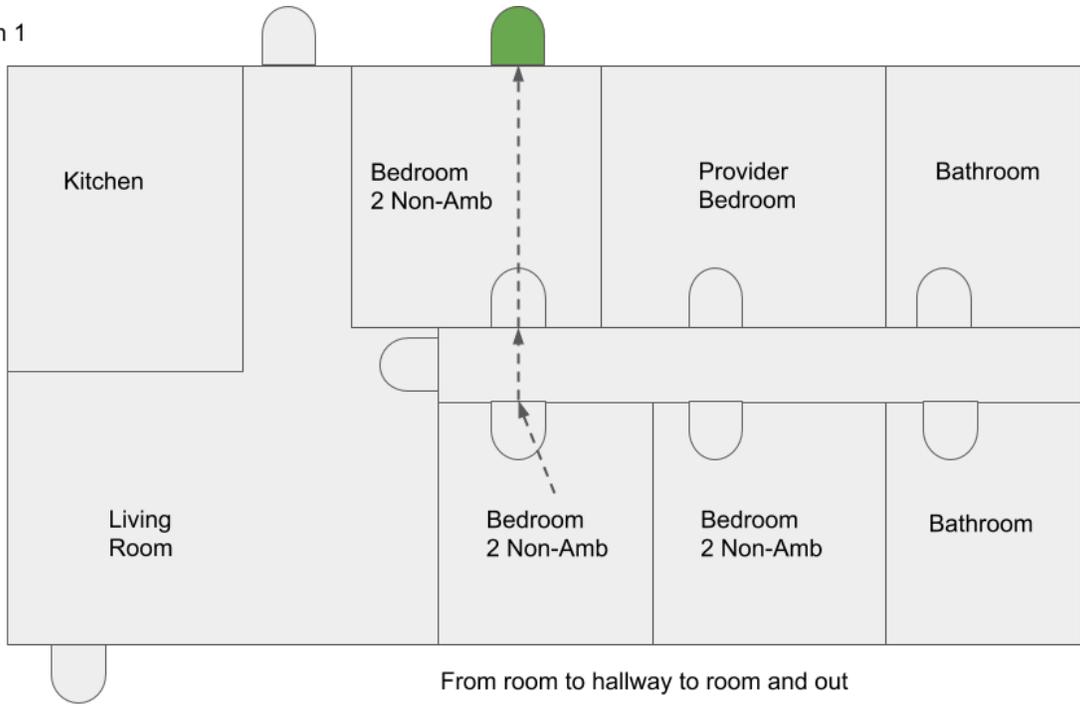
22) Securing Compressed Gas Containers, Cylinders and Tanks:

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

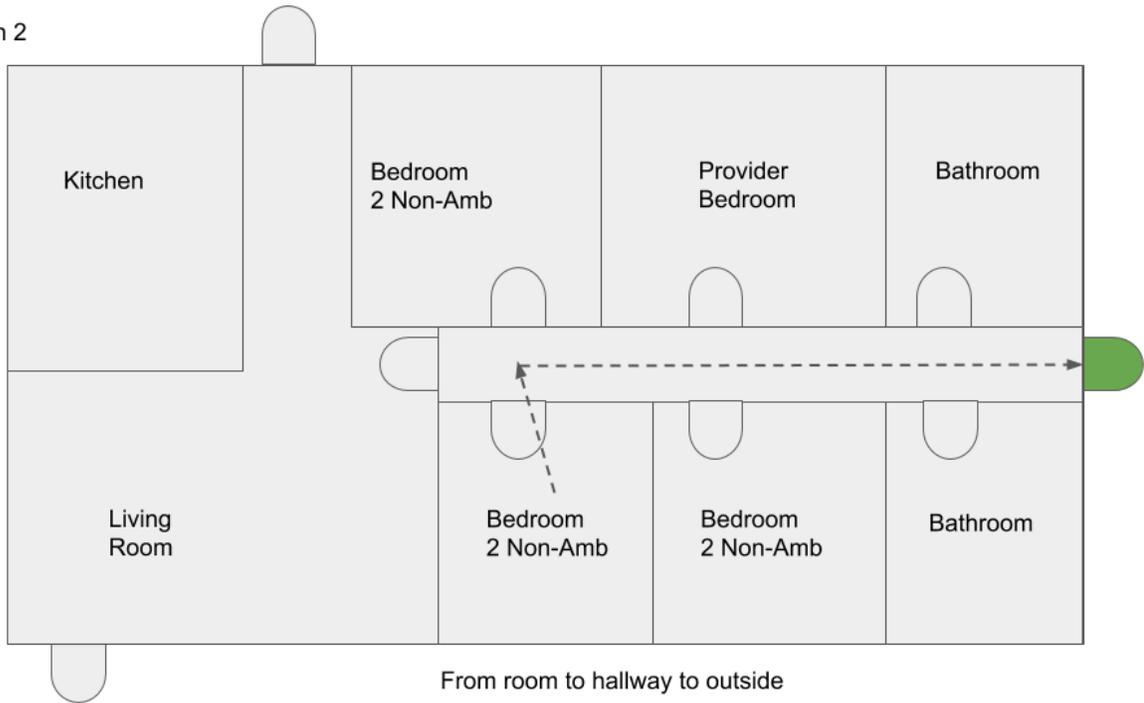
23) Ramps:

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

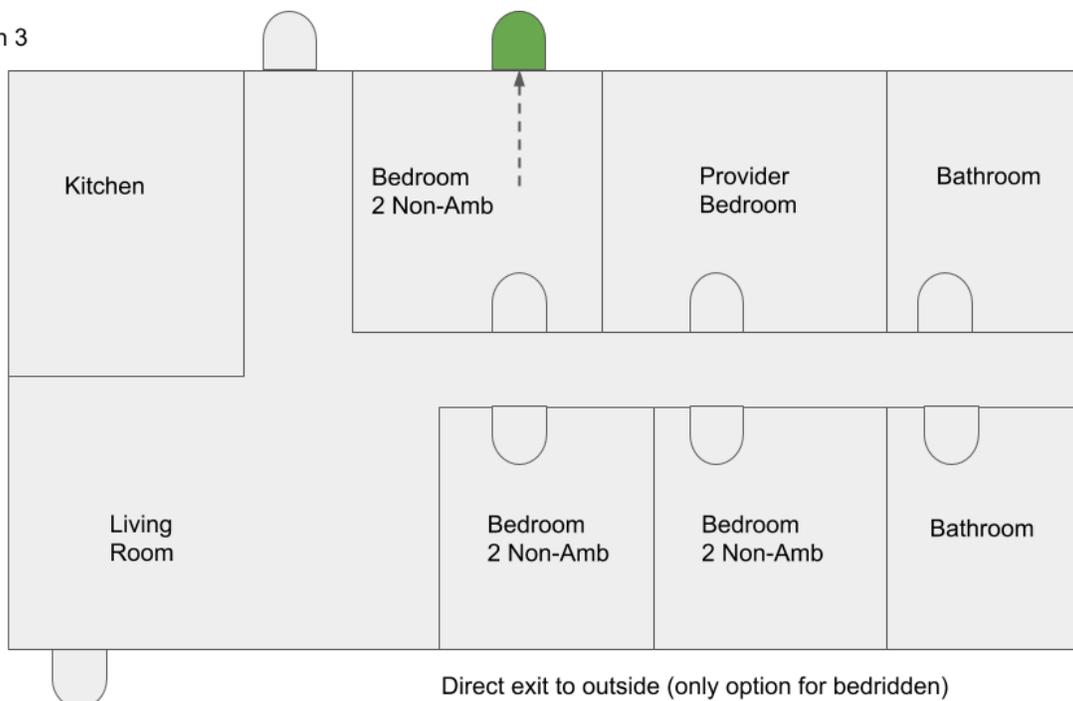
Option 1



Option 2



Option 3



Option 4

