



Fire Safety and Evacuation Plans

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Statutory Requirements

(b) Each assisted living facility shall develop and maintain fire safety and evacuation plans. The plans shall include but are not limited to:

- (1) location and number of resident sleeping rooms;
- (2) employee actions to be taken in the event of a fire or similar emergency;
- (3) fire protection procedures necessary for residents; and
- (4) procedures for resident movement, evacuation, or relocation during a fire or similar emergency including the identification of unique or unusual resident needs for movement or evacuation.

(c) Employees of assisted living facilities shall receive training on the fire safety and evacuation plans upon hiring and at least twice per year thereafter.

(d) Fire safety and evacuation plans shall be readily available at all times within the facility.

(e) Residents who are capable of assisting in their own evacuation shall be trained on the proper actions to take in the event of a fire to include movement, evacuation, or relocation. The training shall be made available to residents at least once per year.

(f) Evacuation drills are required for employees twice per year per shift with at least one evacuation drill every other month. Evacuation of the residents is not required. Fire alarm system activation is not required to initiate the evacuation drill.

Fire Safety and Evacuation Plan

- This is your plan and policy you would use to train your staff so everyone knows what to do in the event of a fire or similar emergency
- This plan is separate from the Emergency Preparedness plan
- Plan should be in central location, accessible to all employees
- If you have multiple floors or wings, those floors and wings should have copies of the plan if you expect staff to take the plan and implement it
- If you have a locked Memory care unit, having one copy in the area is a good procedure. Especially if employees are trained to stay with residents in case of any emergency, they will need the policy book to reference in any emergencies

- If the facility received/purchased a policy developed by a third party, please modify/update the facility-specific contents. Some examples we have seen are below
 - The policy states that residents should be evacuated to the nearest set of smoke compartment doors when the facility is a residential home and does not contain any smoke compartments
 - The policy states that when the fire alarm is triggered, all fire doors on magnetic holders will automatically close and that residents are to remain behind these doors when the facility does not have any doors that are on magnetic door holders or a fire alarm system
 - The policy states that the fire alarm system was wired directly to the fire station when the facility did not have a fire alarm system

Location and Number of Resident Sleeping Rooms

(b) Each assisted living facility shall develop and maintain fire safety and evacuation plans. The plans shall include but are not limited to:

(1) location and number of resident sleeping rooms;

- On a floorplan or diagram of your facility, show the location and number of resident rooms. Each diagram should have the apartments/ bedrooms numbered so anyone looking at the diagram could quickly and easily understand how many there are and where they are located on each floor. Having the rooms numbered or labeled on a plan does help any first responders quickly identify the location of a resident room if there is an associated emergency
- We also see fire extinguisher locations, smoke barriers and exits on this plan so the person looking at it can quickly understand the path of egress referenced in the written policy (to another smoke barrier or to outside)
- Many providers also include the location you are on the plan where it is posted and primary evacuation routes to exits are highlighted from that location
- Many floorplans also show meeting area outside and the different options to get there for an evacuation, so staff understands where to go

(b) Each assisted living facility shall develop and maintain fire safety and evacuation plans. The plans shall include but are not limited to:

(2) employee actions to be taken in the event of a fire or similar emergency;

- Each employee needs to know what to do. Not every employee has the requisite experience or expertise to know how to deal with a fire or emergency, so the plan should be developed by a qualified person who can determine the best actions for employees to take based on the type of residents and type of facility they have
- We usually see facilities outline actions to be taken in a couple different scenarios (can have many more)
- Fire in a resident room? What would those procedures be for staff? Do you evacuate that room? What about adjacent rooms and rooms across the corridor? Where would staff be directed to evacuate those residents to? Are employees directed to use a fire extinguisher? Who would ensure the door to the room is shut when everyone is out? What staff person calls 911 and directs the emergency services personnel to the site and where they need to go?
- Fire in a corridor? Do residents shelter in place or get evacuated? If evacuated, where is staff directed to take them? What staff person oversees that? What staff person calls 911 and directs the emergency services personnel to the site and where they need to go?

Employee Actions, Continued

- Simply using RACE and PASS are a good backbone to a plan but need to be expanded on to provide clear direction to the employee. The employee actions should be a guideline of what is expected of each employee from initiation of the emergency to the time where all residents are safe, and any danger is mitigated
- The best plans usually outline a couple scenarios that employees can determine the best evacuation procedure for each emergency. This is why it is good to have this plan available so staff can reference this plan during the incident
- We have reviewed plans that include procedures for evacuation to alternate locations in cold or severe weather situations

(b) Each assisted living facility shall develop and maintain fire safety and evacuation plans. The plans shall include but are not limited to:

(3) fire protection procedures necessary for residents; and

- Residents need to know their role when it comes to fire safety and evacuation
- What are your residents' actions to take in an emergency if staff cannot evacuate them? The egress window in the room is the second means of egress in case of the first outside of the room. Do they know how to operate the windows?
- If the procedures are provided in resident handbook, should also be included in fire safety and evacuation plan so that employees and residents are on the same page
- Best plans generally give a couple scenarios

Resident Procedures, continued

Scenario 1: What should residents do if they discover a fire in their room?

- Should they call 911?
- Should they attempt to put it out?
- Should they leave their room, shut their door, and find a staff member to help them?

Scenario 2: What should residents do if the alarms are going off in the building?

- Should they run out of the house?
 - Should they leave their room and gather in the living room?
 - How do they know it is safe to open their bedroom door?
 - What should they do if they cannot leave their bedroom?
- These scenarios might look different for each resident depending on their capabilities. You do not need to write a specific fire evacuation plan for each resident, but it should be specific to the level of care that you provide at your facility

Procedures for Movement

(b) Each assisted living facility shall develop and maintain fire safety and evacuation plans. The plans shall include but are not limited to:

(4) procedures for resident movement, evacuation, or relocation during a fire or similar emergency including the identification of unique or unusual resident needs for movement or evacuation.

- Have you worked with your team to identify the residents in your facility that may need assistance during an evacuation? One good strategy we have seen was to quickly identify which residents in which apartments or bedrooms will need assistance
- Some facilities have created color-coded floor plans that are hung in the administration area and part of their evacuation plan is to have someone in that area with a radio or other communication device letting staff know which apartments will need assistance. They practice this communication during evacuation drills. This type of strategy might work best in facilities with large resident capacities, complex floor plans or multiple buildings
- Some facilities have placed color-coded dot stickers on the door frames or name plates of apartments, that relate to the need and level of assistance during evacuation. This type of strategy might work best in facilities with a large resident capacity and wide range of care needs from independent living through dementia care
- Some facilities keep a resident roster in their fire safety and evacuation binders that have the apartments/ bedrooms with residents who will need assistance identified in a way that is quick and easy to understand. This type of strategy might work best in facilities with a lower resident capacity and more narrow range of care needs. A resident roster is a great checklist to account for all residents if an evacuation takes place, especially in scenarios where some residents self-evacuation to the designated location

Procedures for Movement, continued

We are seeing a lot of green, yellow, and red used and providers tell us that is working

Green = no assistance needed

Yellow = some assistance needed

Red = full assistance needed

The good thing about systems like this is you can create them and make them work for your facility, your staffing model, and your resident capacity regardless of size.

Once you identify which residents will need assistance, you can then start to write policy and procedures around what type of assistance staff need to know how to give.

- What is your policy for residents who use a wheelchair, walker, cane?
- What about residents who are bedbound or have a temporary injury that impacts their ability to self-evacuate?
- What is your policy for residents who may be vision or hearing impaired?
- Do you have residents that require some coaxing to leave their room or the facility in general?

Procedures for Movement, continued

- Another aspect of this section of the statute is relocation. That can look like a lot of things depending on the size and capacity of your facility
- Facilities with larger capacities may have strategies for isolated, partial, and complete evacuations. When those residents are evacuated from an area and temporarily relocated to a different area what does that look like? Does the adjacent smoke compartment have a place to hold the displaced residents? Can the residents sit if needed?
- Planned evacuations are covered in the Emergency Preparedness portion of your policies and will look completely different than emergency evacuations. In emergency evacuations your staff will not be grabbing medications, equipment, and medical records for each resident. They will be quickly relocating them to a safe area

Procedures for Movement, continued

- Facilities with smaller capacities your evacuation strategy may only be complete evacuation
- What does that look like? Where are you gathering? If it is the middle of winter, does that meeting point change? How are residents being protected from the elements if the facility cannot be re-entered immediately? There is a span of time between when the residents exit the facility to when they are temporarily relocated to a different, safe location and that span of time needs to have some thought put into it. What does that 10-60 minutes look like? We have seen plans that say staff can have residents go in their car to stay warm. Are staff expected to pile everyone in their car to keep warm? What if your staff member doesn't have a car or does not drive that day? Will all the residents fit in the car? This is a real issue we need to deal with in the state of Minnesota
- Facilities often use the RACE acronym for employee procedure in the case of a fire. Each facility has to develop the facility-specific RACE steps on its own terms and develop the evacuation process.

R (Rescue) - Rescue anyone in immediate danger to safe places. The facility can define the facility's specific safe place, how you can move/evacuate residents, any residents require special assistant to evacuate, which exit routes you are using, which resident you need to help first, where you are moving residents if you can not come back to the facility, and how you are transferring them...

(c) Employees of assisted living facilities shall receive training on the fire safety and evacuation plans upon hiring and at least twice per year thereafter

- Employees must be trained when hired and twice per year thereafter
- This training must be documented and easily checked by engineer surveyor
- It is best to have training for new employees and have training scheduled twice per year (separated by 6 months or so)
- Some facilities have a make-up session for staff that cannot attend
- Drills are not training

Plans to be Readily Available

(d) Fire safety and evacuation plans shall be readily available at all times within the facility

- Plan should be in central location, accessible to all employees
- The best prepared facilities place the evacuation plan in each unit or wing if you expect staff to take the plan and implement it
- Even though staff are trained, staff need to have the plan available in an emergency
- If you have a locked Memory care unit, having one copy in the area is a good procedure. Especially if employees are trained to stay with residents in case of any emergency, they will need the policy book to reference in any emergencies

(e) Residents who are capable of assisting in their own evacuation shall be trained on the proper actions to take in the event of a fire to include movement, evacuation, or relocation. The training shall be made available to residents at least once per year

- If you expect residents to assist in their own evacuation, those residents need to be trained on what to do
- The training that is made available to residents must be documented. If this is part of a resident meeting or resident council, save the agenda or minutes to provide verification that the facility is providing this offering
- If those residents refuse to get the training, then it is probably safe that those residents are not capable to assist on their own evacuation and must be evacuated by staff

(f) Evacuation drills are required for employees twice per year per shift with at least one evacuation drill every other month. Evacuation of the residents is not required. Fire alarm system activation is not required to initiate the evacuation drill

- An evacuation drill must be conducted every other month
- At least two of these drills must be conducted on each shift during the year timeframe
- If you are only running two shifts, an evacuation drill is still required every other month
- Make sure to conduct the drills during the specific shift times. - The cause of the fire, staff capacity, and residents' lifestyles are very different when the fire occurred during daytime vs. nighttime

Thank You!

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FIRE SAFETY AND EVACUATION PLANS

