



Corona Fire Department

Residential Based Care Facilities Guideline per 2025 California Fire Code

PURPOSE

This guideline is intended to provide the minimum requirements necessary for review and approval of residentially based licensed care facilities within the City of Corona. The guidelines have been prepared using the 2025 California Fire and Building Codes and the California Code of Regulations, Title 19.

SCOPE

The regulations regarding residentially based care facilities are found in the California Code of Regulations Titles 19 and 24. The following guidelines will ensure that appropriate requirements are met.

OCCUPANCY CLASSIFICATIONS

Building Occupancy Classifications

R-2.1

Residential occupancies including buildings, structures or parts thereof housing clients, on a 24-hour basis, who because of age or mental disability or other reasons, live in a supervised residential environment that provides personal care services. This occupancy may contain more than six non-ambulatory and/or bedridden clients. This group shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

Assisted living facilities such as:

- Residential care facilities
- Residential care facilities for the elderly (RCFEs)
- Adult residential facilities
- Congregate living health facilities
- Group homes
- Residential care facilities for the chronically ill
- Congregate living health facilities for the terminally ill

Social rehabilitation facilities such as:

- Halfway houses
- Community correctional centers
- Community treatment programs
- Work furlough programs
- Alcoholism or drug abuse recovery or treatment facilities

R-3.1

This occupancy may include facilities licensed by a governmental agency for a residentially based 24-hour care facility providing accommodation for six or fewer clients of any age. Clients may be classified as ambulatory, non-ambulatory or bedridden. A Group R-3.1 occupancy shall meet the requirements for construction as defined for Group R-3, except as otherwise provided for in CFC Chapter 4 Special Provisions for Licensed 24-Hour Care Facilities in a Group R-2.1, R-3.1 or R-4 Occupancy. This group may include:

- Adult residential facilities
- Congregate living health facilities
- 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.
- Residential care facilities for the elderly
- Small family day care homes and residential care facilities for the chronically ill



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R-4

Residential occupancies shall include buildings, structures, or portions thereof for more than six ambulatory clients, excluding staff. Group R-4 occupancies shall meet the requirements for construction as defined for Group R-3, provided the building is protected by an automatic sprinkler system installed in accordance with CFC requirements. This occupancy may include a maximum of six non-ambulatory or bedridden clients and shall include:

Assisted living facilities such as:

- Residential care facilities
- Residential care facilities for the elderly (RCFEs)
- Adult residential facilities
- Congregate living health facilities
- Group homes

Social rehabilitation facilities such as:

- Halfway houses
- Community correctional centers
- Community correction reentry centers
- Community treatment programs
- Work furlough programs
- Alcoholism or drug abuse recovery or treatment facilities

PRE-INSPECTION PROCESS

Prior to requesting a fire clearance inspection, a pre-inspection process requires document submittal for review. A site plan and letter of intent must be provided. Please submit these drawings and letter at least two weeks prior to requesting inspection.

Site Plan Requirements

Provide a site plan for the residence/facility. The plans must include the following:

- The address of the building
- Occupancy classification as defined above
- Number of stories in your home/facility
- Exterior of building showing access to public way
- Locations of exits and egress pathways.
- Locations of landings, ramps, stairways, steps, sidewalks, and gates.
- Locations of ambulatory, non-ambulatory, and/or bedridden clients
- Locations of any rooms that staff only
- Smoke detector and carbon monoxide detector locations
- Fire alarm location
- Fire extinguisher location

All dimensions must be included. A floor plan showing furniture layout shall be provided for each room. Aisle widths shall be indicated in the plan even through furniture does not need to be drawn to scale. Furniture shall be in place for fire inspection.



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Letter of Intent Requirements

Provide a letter of intent describing the details and intent of your business. At a minimum include:

- Facility description and type of care provided.
- Hours and Days of Operation
- Number of staff members
- Number of clients
- Description of clients including:
 - Age range
 - Ambulatory, non-ambulatory or bedridden status
 - Any mental or physical restrictions

Corona Municipal Code 3.02 requires that we collect a fee for cost recovery to provide this pre-inspection and to process your State Mandated Fire Clearance. The fee for this pre-inspection is currently set at \$175.00. Please remit the requested documents and payment prior to scheduling inspections.

A fire clearance **does not** constitute zoning clearance. Contact the Planning Department for zoning information.

EXITING REQUIREMENTS

1. There shall be a minimum of two exits from the dwelling. Exits shall not pass through kitchens, garages, storerooms, closets and shall not pass through more than one intervening room.
2. All exit doors shall have installed hardware is openable from the inside without a key or any special knowledge or effort. If a deadbolt is provided, it shall release when the primary doorknob or lever is turned. No other locks or latches shall be on doors or gates.
3. Exits shall be 36 inches wide by 6 feet 8 inches in height 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 or larger door will be necessary.
4. All exits shall be readily identifiable as paths of egress. Exits shall be marked by readily visible exit signs to clearly indicate direction of egress travel in cases where the exit or the path of egress is not immediately visible to the occupants. This is commonly required where curtains or blinds are covering exit doors. The color and design of lettering, arrows, and other symbols on exit signs shall be of high contrast with their background. Words on the sign shall be in block letters 6 inches in height with a stroke of not less than $\frac{3}{4}$ inch.
5. An evacuation sign shall be posted in a central location. Signs shall be properly framed and mounted.
6. No bed, chair, equipment, storage materials, or any other item shall be placed in any manner that would block or obstruct the required width of any exit. This shall include the exterior sidewalks leading from the exits to the public way.
7. A floor or landing shall be provided on each side of every exit door. The floor or landing shall not be more than $\frac{1}{2}$ " lower than the threshold of the doorway. The exterior floor or landing shall have a minimum length of 44 inches and be at least as wide as the opening. For hinged doors, the landing shall extend 24 inches past the edge of the door.
8. If the exterior landing has more than $\frac{1}{2}$ inch step down, a ramp shall be provided. The slope of the ramp shall not be steeper than 1 inch vertical to 12 inches horizontal with a minimum clear width of 36 inches. Ramps shall have a non-skid surface. As an example, a 6-inch drop from a landing would require a 6 foot long ramp. Changes in level between $\frac{1}{4}$ " and $\frac{1}{2}$ " shall be beveled with a slope of no greater than 1 unit vertical in 2 units horizontal (50% slope). Changes in level greater than $\frac{1}{2}$ " shall be accomplished by means of a ramp.



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9. Handrails shall be provided on each side of the ramp. Handrails shall be 30 to 34 inches above the ramp surface. These handrails shall be 1 ¼" to 2" in cross section dimension.
10. Guardrails shall be provided if ramps are more than 30 inches above grade. The top of guardrails shall not be less than 36" in height.
11. Bedrooms used by ambulatory clients have no special requirements beyond what is required in sections 1-9.
12. Bedrooms used by non-ambulatory clients shall have access to at least one required exit which conforms to one of the following:
 - a. Exits through a corridor/hallway or area and into a bedroom (in the immediate area) which has an exit directly to the exterior. Bedroom doors used as exits shall have exit signs and shall not be provided with a lock or latch preventing egress.
 - b. Through a corridor/hallway serving the sleeping area which exits directly to the exterior.
 - c. Direct from the bedroom to the exterior.
 - d. Exit through an adjoining bedroom that exits to the exterior. (No privacy locks on bedrooms allowed, if exiting through an adjoining bedroom.)

Note: The hallway shall be separated from common areas of the home by a solid wood door of not less than 1 3/8" in thickness. The door shall be maintained as self-closing or shall be automatic closing by actuation of a smoke detector installed with magnetic door hold open devices that shall release the door upon activation.
12. Group R-3.1 occupancies housing only one bedridden client, shall comply with the following:
 - a. A direct exit to the exterior of the residence shall be provided from the client sleeping room, and
 - b. Doors to a bedridden client's sleeping room shall be of a self-closing, positive latching 1 3/8" solid core wood door. Such doors shall 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 shall be maintained self-closing or shall be automatic closing by actuation of a smoke alarm which releases a hold-open device.
 - c. A night latch, dead bolt, security chain or similar locking device shall not be installed on any interior door leading from a bedridden client's sleeping room to any interior area such as a corridor, hallway, or common use area of the dwelling.
 - d. The exterior exit door to a bedridden client's sleeping room shall be openable from both the interior and the exterior of the residence.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

1. Address numbers shall be posted on the house and shall be visible from the street. Said numbers shall be a minimum of 4", shall contrast with their background and shall be sufficiently illuminated for viewing the numbers at night. Illumination may be either internal or external.
2. A fire extinguisher with a minimum classification of 2A10BC shall be mounted in a conspicuous and unobstructed location. The top of the extinguisher shall be between 3 and 5 feet above finished floor. The extinguisher shall be serviced annually by a licensed company and affixed with a tag either annually or after each use. Extinguishers must be located every 75 feet of travel and on all floors serving clients.
3. If the garage is attached to the dwelling, the door between the dwelling and the garage shall be maintained to be self-closing and latching. The door shall be a minimum of 1 3/8" thick solid wood door. The garage shall not be used for Any purposes other than the storage of items and vehicles. There shall be no openings from the garage into any of the sleeping areas.



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4. Good housekeeping shall be maintained. The storage of flammable and combustible liquids is not permitted. Maintain garage in neat, orderly fashion with a minimum of combustible storage and 18" clearance from the water heater shall be maintained. Water heaters shall conform to California Mechanical and Building Code provisions. They shall be equipped with flame covers over pilot lights and be properly earthquake strapped.
5. Chimneys shall be equipped with a spark arrestor. Exterior conditions shall not constitute any that could be conceived as a fire hazard.
6. A smoke detector shall be installed in each sleeping room and at a point centrally located in the corridor or area giving access to sleeping areas. Additional detectors may be required for vaulted ceilings adjacent to the corridor. Detectors shall sound an alarm audible in all sleeping areas of the unit in which they are located. This may require interconnected smoke detectors or a fire alarm system.

New construction requires smoke detectors to take their primary power from a commercial source and wiring shall be permanent. Existing occupancies may have smoke detectors that use batteries as their sole power supply.
7. Carbon monoxide detectors are required to be installed in the immediate vicinity of all sleeping areas and at a point centrally located in the living areas.
8. Permits shall be secured from the building department as required for structural and electrical modifications. Final building department inspection shall be signed off prior to Fire Department inspection.

Upon approval of the Fire Department, the Fire Clearance form will be signed and forwarded to the Licensing Division under the department for which the application and permit is issued.

Fire Clearance may be revoked at any time for violating the conditions of the approved fire clearance or requirements of the fire code.

New fire clearance inspections must be completed for any change to license application.

SPECIAL PROVISIONS

1. R-2.1, R-3.1 or R-4 occupancies are limited to house six or less clients. Any facility wishing to be licensed for more than 6 clients, must complete a change in occupancy classification with proper permits through Building and Planning department.
2. Group R-3.1 protective social care facilities which house persons who are hearing impaired, shall be provided with notification appliances for the hearing impaired installed in accordance with NFPA 72 and which shall activate upon initiation of the fire alarm system or the smoke alarms. (2025 CFC Section 907.5.2.3.4)
3. Restraint shall not be practiced in Group R-2.1, R-3.1 or R-4 occupancies per 2025 CBC 435.2.1.
Exception: Occupancies which meet all requirements for a Group I-3 occupancy.
4. Non ambulatory persons in R-2.1, R-3.1 or R-4 occupancies with 3000 s.f. of floor area above the first floor, shall not be housed above the first floor unless the building is constructed of not less than one-hour fire-resistive construction throughout and the home is equipped with an automatic fire sprinkler system in accordance with CFC Chapter 9.
5. Group R-3.1 occupancies housing more than one bedridden client shall be protected with an automatic fire sprinkler system. Homes with more than one bedridden client, must comply with the exiting requirements as listed for non-ambulatory clients.



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6. Grounds of a Residential Care for the Elderly facility serving Alzheimer clients may be fenced and gates therein equipped with locks, provided safe dispersal areas are located not less than 50' from the buildings. Dispersal areas shall be sized to provide an area of not less than 3 square feet per occupant. Gates shall not be installed across corridors or passageways leading to such dispersal areas unless they comply with egress requirements.
7. Delayed egress shall be permitted in buildings that are equipped with an automatic sprinkler system and an approved automatic smoke or heat detection system. Must follow requirements as set forth in CFC 1010.2.12.
8. Every person, firm or corporation maintaining or operating any Group I or R-2.1, R-3.1 or R-4 occupancy shall provide an operator's statement in accordance with Section 13132 of the Health and Safety Code which reads as follows:

“13132. Every person, firm corporation maintaining or operating any facility for the care of the mentally handicapped shall file a statement with the fire authority having jurisdiction within five days of the admission or readmission of a patient stating that such patient is an ambulatory or non-ambulatory person and enumerating the reasons for such classification. Such a statement shall also be filed for each existing patient within 30 days of the effective date of this section.

Any statement required to be filed pursuant to this section shall be certified as to its correctness by the person attending such patient.

It shall be unlawful for any person, firm or corporation required to file a statement pursuant to this section to include false statements therein. Any such act shall be in violation of this section and subject to the provisions of Section 13112.”
9. Every licensee admitting or retaining a bedridden resident shall, within 48 hours of the resident's admission or retention in the facility, notify the local fire authority with jurisdiction of the estimated length of time the resident will retain his or her bedridden status in the facility.