



Building Services
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GEN-20 Adult Family Homes

This document clarifies issues regarding building code rules regulating Adult Family Homes. These rules became effective July 1, 2001.

Adult Family Homes are classified as Group R, Division 3, Occupancies. There are life/safety issues facing Adult Family Homes that do not exist in typical single-family dwellings. In addition to meeting the Group R, Division 3 Occupancy requirements, there are added requirements in IRC/Washington State Amendments (WSA) R325.

These regulations apply **only** to all newly constructed adult family homes and all existing single-family homes being converted to adult family homes.

IBC/WSA 310.1 defines an Adult Family Home as “a dwelling in which a person or persons provide personal care, special care, room and board to more than one but not more than six adults who are not related by blood or marriage to the person or persons providing the services.”

If a home has just been constructed, or an existing home wishes to become newly licensed as an Adult Family Home, the home owner must (1) receive approval from the Building Official and (2) obtain a license from the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS). A license cannot be issued by DSHS without the Building Official's approval of the home, certifying compliance with these regulations.

Specific Requirements:

- **Floor Plan:** In addition to other Building Permit submittal requirements, an applicant must submit
 - An application identifying the project (or Change of Use) as a Group R, Division 3 Adult Family Home;
 - A floor plan identifying the means of egress and any components of the means of egress, such as stairways, ramps, etc., and clearly noting all sleeping rooms in the dwelling.
 - **Note:** This Floor Plan would be the same as the floor plan/evacuation plan submitted by the applicant to DSHS for approval. The plan will serve both purposes.

- **Sleeping Room Classification:** The sleeping rooms must be classified as Type S, NS1 or NS2. These types mean the sleeping room:
 - **Type S** has as a part of its means of egress, stairs, elevators, or platform lifts
 - **Type NS1** has one means of egress at grade level or has a ramp complying with IRC R311.6
 - **Type NS2** is where two means of egress are at grade level or have ramps complying with IRC R311.6.

- The classification of the bedrooms – noted on the approved floor plan—will then allow the DSHS licensors to limit the usage of those rooms by the occupant's "Evacuation Capability." For example, a Type S room could be occupied by a person with Evacuation Capability Level 1 (capable of walking a normal path to safety, including stairs. (R325.3)
- Locks and Latches: The Building Department has to approve the locksets installed on bedroom and bathroom doors. All doors need to be openable from the outside, whether locked or not. This is to allow the caregiver access in the event the occupant falls or has another emergency and can't respond to unlock the door. (R325.4)

All latches on closets need to be openable from the inside. This is to allow an occupant, if they get into a closet and the door closes behind them, to get out of the closet by themselves. (R325.4)

- Smoke Alarm Requirements: If one smoke detector activates, it will be audible in all parts of the building. For example, if a smoke detector inside the bedroom of an aged occupant activates, the sound of the activation has to be audible in the caregiver's room, the laundry room, the kitchen, or wherever the caregiver may be at the moment. Typically, this will require that smoke detection units are wired together so all activate at once. Others may need to be added in non-sleeping room areas. (R325.5)
- Escape Windows: All newly constructed or newly licensed Adult Family Homes are required to have emergency escape and rescue windows meeting the requirements of IRC R310. (See SFR-15 Sleeping Room Egress) There are no exceptions for existing structures being converted to Adult Family Homes after July 1, 2001. (R325.5)
- Fire Apparatus Access Roads and Water Supply: All Adult Family Homes are required to be served by both access roadways and water supplies meeting the requirements as specified in IRC R325.7 WSA. The exceptions for sprinklered structures could be applied by the local jurisdiction. This requirement is to prohibit Adult Family Homes in locations not readily accessible by emergency apparatus. In case of a fire, evacuation of the occupants is paramount and must be accounted for in the placement and design of the home.

The Inspection Request that follows was developed by the Washington Association of Building Officials (WABO) in cooperation with DSHS for use by both building departments and licensors.

REQUEST FOR INSPECTION of ADULT FAMILY HOME

Applicant must complete Sections 1, 2, 3, and 4. Application must be complete to be processed.

Section 1 – Property Information

Site Address: _____ Parcel #: _____

Section 2 – Applicant Information

Property Owner Name: _____ Daytime Phone: _____

Licensee Name: _____ Daytime Phone: _____

Section 3 – Floor Plan

A complete floor plan must include all sleeping rooms, identified by number (#1, #2, etc.) and all components for exiting (stairs, ramps, platform lifts, elevators). Attach additional sheets if necessary.

Section 4 – Disclaimer/Signature

I certify under penalty of perjury that the information furnished by me is true and correct to the best of my knowledge, and that I am authorized by the owner of the above premises to request inspection for and operate an Adult Family Home at this location. I further certify that I have made application to the Department of Social and Health Services and the jurisdiction for the appropriate license(s) to conduct such business at this location. I further agree to hold harmless the jurisdiction conducting such inspections at my request as to any claim (including costs, expenses, and attorneys' fees incurred in the investigation of such claim), which may be made by any person, including the undersigned, and filed against the jurisdiction but only where such claim arises out of the reliance of the jurisdiction, including its officers and employees, upon the accuracy of the information supplied to the jurisdiction as part of this application.

Name/Title: _____ Date: _____
_____ Property Owner _____ Applicant _____ Licensee

Section 5 – Inspection Checklist

Home is licensed on or after July 1, 2001 YES NO
_____ _____

SLEEPING ROOMS (for Types, see page 2)

Sleeping Room #1 S _____ NS1 _____ NS2 _____
 Bedroom door is openable from the outside when locked _____
 Closet doors are readily openable from the inside _____
 Smoke alarm is installed in the bedroom _____
 Sleeping room window has a minimum net openable area of 5.7SF (24”H x 20”W) _____
 Sleeping room window has a maximum height from floor to bottom of window of 44” _____

Sleeping Room #2 S _____ NS1 _____ NS2 _____
 Bedroom door is openable from the outside when locked _____
 Closet doors are readily openable from the inside _____
 Smoke alarm is installed in the bedroom _____
 Sleeping room window has a minimum net openable area of 5.7SF (24”H x 20”W) _____
 Sleeping room window has a maximum height from floor to bottom of window of 44” _____

Sleeping Room #3 S _____ NS1 _____ NS2 _____
 Bedroom door is openable from the outside when locked _____
 Closet doors are readily openable from the inside _____
 Smoke alarm is installed in the bedroom _____
 Sleeping room window has a minimum net openable area of 5.7SF (24”H x 20”W) _____
 Sleeping room window has a maximum height from floor to bottom of window of 44” _____

Sleeping Room #4 S _____ NS1 _____ NS2 _____
 Bedroom door is openable from the outside when locked _____
 Closet doors are readily openable from the inside _____
 Smoke alarm is installed in the bedroom _____
 Sleeping room window has a minimum net openable area of 5.7SF (24”H x 20”W) _____
 Sleeping room window has a maximum height from floor to bottom of window of 44” _____

Sleeping Room #5 S _____ NS1 _____ NS2 _____
 Bedroom door is openable from the outside when locked _____
 Closet doors are readily openable from the inside _____
 Smoke alarm is installed in the bedroom _____
 Sleeping room window has a minimum net openable area of 5.7SF (24”H x 20”W) _____
 Sleeping room window has a maximum height from floor to bottom of window of 44” _____

Sleeping Room #6 S _____ NS1 _____ NS2 _____
 Bedroom door is openable from the outside when locked _____
 Closet doors are readily openable from the inside _____
 Smoke alarm is installed in the bedroom _____
 Sleeping room window has a minimum net openable area of 5.7SF (24”H x 20”W) _____
 Sleeping room window has a maximum height from floor to bottom of window of 44” _____

GENERAL

Bathroom doors are openable from the outside when locked _____
 Smoke alarms are installed on all levels of the dwelling _____
 All smoke alarms are audible in all parts of the dwelling upon activation of single device _____
 Access road and water supply approved by Fire Department _____

_____ PASSED _____ CORRECTIONS REQUIRED _____ PERMIT REQUIRED

INSPECTOR: _____ DATE: _____
 Inspector Name Printed: _____