



Department of Public Health and Human Services

Quality Assurance Division ♦ Certification Bureau ♦ 2401 Colonial Drive, 2rd Floor, PO Box 202953 ♦ Helena, MT 59620 ♦ Phone: 406-444-2099 ♦ Fax: 406-444-3456

Steve Bullock, Governor

Sheila Hogan, Director

Quality Assurance Division (QAD) Certification and Licensing Bureaus Provider Information Notice - #032417

Remodeling and Construction in Health Care Facilities

The DPHHS QAD Certification Bureau has issued the following information in conjunction with the Licensure Bureau. This guidance is for health care facilities that are certified (e.g. hospitals, critical access hospitals, nursing homes, ambulatory surgical centers, end stage renal dialysis facilities, etc.) and are planning construction projects while residents or patients are still occupying areas of the facility.

Construction may include large projects such as new additions, rehabilitation, remodels, including simple remodels of existing facilities.

All proposed changes to facilities must be sent for approval to Brian Nelson, Construction Consultant, at brian.nelson@mt.gov or DPHHS QAD, 2401 Colonial Drive, Helena, MT 59620. Minor changes do not require full architectural/engineering drawings, but must include a sketch of the current floor plan with changes noted.

Life Safety Code (LSC) compliance during construction shall include consideration of maintaining fire sprinkler systems, smoke detectors, exiting, smoke compartment requirements, etc. in accordance with NFPA 101, Life Safety Code, 2012 edition.

Following is a partial list of items to keep in mind during construction:

- Ensure all ceiling tiles are in place at the end of each day or a fire watch is required until construction is complete.
- Temporary panels shall be made of noncombustible materials that are the same rating as the wall they are temporarily replacing. For example, an existing sheet rock wall with a one-hour fire rating is required to be replaced with a one-hour fire rating.
- Temporary enclosures shall be made of noncombustible panels or flame resistant tarpaulins and shall meet Test Method #2 of NFPA 701. A fire extinguisher with an equivalency for all classes of fire that could be expected is required to be within 15 feet of the temporary enclosure.
- If construction involves temporarily closing off required exits, temporary exit signage with directional arrows shall be used to clearly redirect residents, patients, staff and the public to the alternate exit location.
- Provide staff training as needed when construction affects changes in exits and evacuation routes by performing fire drills.
- Contact the DPHHS Life Safety Code Supervisor at 406.444.4170 and the Fire Department when the fire alarm system will be out of service for more than four (4) hours or the fire sprinkler system will be out of services for more than ten (10) hours.