

Florida Department of Health Environmental Health Roles in ALFs

Water Programs

Each well water system for the larger facilities is permitted and inspected by the county health department (CHD) in nine urban counties, or by the DEP in the other counties per the Safe Drinking Water Act. If the facility is small, with fewer than 25 residents and staff, the CHD permits and inspects the water system in all counties per the Limited Use Public Water System rule. Even though a facility is on city water, some have built back-up water systems and those are permitted and inspected by all 67 CHDs. We have an emergency boil water guidance for the food service operation in the AHCA facilities. Some CHDs (23) also issue permits for well construction that is used for potable or irrigation purposes. Water program staff coordinates with Epidemiology staff when water may be the source of an outbreak.

Swimming pools and spas that are located at ACHA facilities are permitted and inspected by CHD staff, unless they meet the water therapy pool exemption in the law.

Community Environmental Health

Group Care Inspections at Assisted Living Facilities:

Group care inspections are performed once per year using Chapter 64E-12, FAC. Group care inspections are sometimes referred to as physical plant or environmental health inspections. In addition to the physical plant standards, it typically includes the food hygiene component for small home-like facilities with less than 11 residents (tier I and II) and also includes the food hygiene component for facilities with 11-24 residents that were open and operating prior to 1-1-08. The following is a listing of the main physical plant inspection components for the annual group care inspection.

1. Water Supply (approved source, accessible, private well testing)
2. Food Service (tiers based on maximum capacity)
 - a. Lower tiers require basic food safety and equipment (sink, handwashing, storage, preparation, food holding temperatures, hot water provided, animals in food service areas)
 - b. Hospices and facilities with 11 or more residents are regulated under Chapter 64E-11, FAC. (requires permit & quarterly food inspection) hand sink, sanitizing dishes, certified food manager
3. Housing (facility maintenance, odors, cleanliness, lighting, inside temperature, sewage disposal, ventilation, toilet rooms, non-slip bathing areas, hot water maximum temperature)
4. Vector and Vermin Control (Infestation prevention, Integrated Pest Management, window screening)
5. Bedding, Towels, & Personal Items (cleanliness & storage, washed between residents)
6. Laundry (separation of clean/dirty, transportation, frequency, equipment properly vented)
7. Medications, Alcohol, Poisonous or Toxic Substances (Locked, labeled, separate from food storage)

8. Garbage & Rubbish Disposal/Storage (Collection, storage area, container)
9. Recreational Areas (clean safe area, free of hazards, water & pool safety)
10. Radon (testing requirements per subsection 404.056(4), (FS))
11. Animal Health & Safety (good health, aggressive animal restriction, parasite screening/treatment)

Food Hygiene: There are four tiers of food standards based on the size of the facility or their operation. The tiers gradually increase food safety and hygiene standards as the capacity increases. In addition, there are requirements for facilities only receiving catered food and for those facilities that may be catering to other facilities from their kitchen. Tier III facilities must meet Chapter 64E-11 standards and are inspected at various frequencies based on risk. The nature of the clientele at ALF's would be a highly susceptible population, so their inspection frequency typically would be quarterly.

Onsite Sewage Treatment and Disposal:

The program ensures that ALF's served by onsite wastewater systems (septic tank systems) are evaluated for adequate sewage disposal capacity before they are permitted to open or to expand their operation.