

Promising Practices: The Environmental Aspects of “Home”

The CMS Interpretive Guidelines and Creating Home

F – 461

Adequate and Comfortable Lighting

Portions of new text related to the environment are highlighted in yellow.

Below is the full text of the CMS Interpretive Guidelines for the tags that have some relationship to the environment, with the CMS revisions in red italics.

The full revisions beyond the environment can be accessed at:

http://www.cms.hhs.gov/SurveyCertificationGenInfo/downloads/SCLetter09_31.pdf

§483.70(d)(1)(vi) Resident Rooms

Bedrooms must --

§483.70(d)(1)(vi) Have at least one window to the outside; and

Interpretive Guidelines §483.70(d)(1)(vi)

A facility with resident room windows, as defined by section 18.3.8 of the 2000 edition of the Life Safety Code, or that open to an atrium in accordance with Life Safety Code can meet this requirement for a window to the outside.

In addition to conforming with the Life Safety Code, this requirement was included to assist the resident’s orientation to day and night, weather, and general awareness of space outside the facility. The facility is required to provide for a “safe, clean, comfortable and homelike environment” by deemphasizing the institutional character of the setting, to the extent possible. Windows are an important aspect in assuring the homelike environment of a facility. **The allowable window sill height shall not exceed 36 inches. The window may be operable.**

§483.70(d)(1)(vii) Have a floor at or above grade level.

Interpretive Guidelines §483.70(d)(1)(vii)

“At or above grade level” means a room in which **the room floor is at or above the surrounding exterior ground level.**

§483.70(d)(2) The facility must provide each resident with—

- (i) A separate bed of proper size and height for the convenience of the resident;**
- (ii) A clean, comfortable mattress;**
- (ii) Bedding, appropriate to the weather and climate;**

Interpretive Guidelines: §483.70(d)(2)(iv) and §483.15(h)(4)

“Functional furniture appropriate to the resident’s needs” means that the furniture in each resident’s room contributes to the resident attaining or maintaining his or her highest practicable level of independence and well-being. In general, furnishings include a place to put clothing away in an organized manner that will let it remain clean, free of wrinkles, and accessible to the resident while protecting it from casual access by others; a place to put personal effects such as pictures and a bedside clock, and furniture suitable for the comfort of the resident and visitors (e.g., a chair).

For issues with arrangement of room furniture according to resident needs and preferences, see §483.15(e), Accommodation of Needs F246.

“Clothes racks and shelves accessible to the resident” means that residents can get to and reach their hanging clothing whenever they choose.

“Private closet space” means that each resident’s clothing is kept separate from clothing of roommate(s).

The term “closet space” is not necessarily limited to a space installed into the wall. For some facilities without such installed closets, compliance may be attained through the use of storage furniture such as wardrobes. Out-of-season items may be stored in alternate locations outside the resident’s room.