

Safety Bulletin

Facility Entrance and Exit Doors 2011



To: All Residential Care Facilities

Purpose: To promote the health and safety of persons who live in residential care facilities.

Background: Recently there have been incidents in which long term care residents with cognitive impairments have accessed unsafe areas (e.g., outdoors, stairwells) of care facilities. As a result of a recent Coroner's Report and recommendations, the following safety standards are recommended:

1. All facility entrance and exit doors (including stairwell doors) must be regularly inspected and maintained to ensure safety mechanisms are in good working order (e.g., alarms, closing/locking mechanisms).
2. An audit tool (or tools) should be developed and implemented to document the following:
 - a. Inspections;
 - b. Maintenance of each entrance and exit door; and
 - c. Date and time and initials of individual completing the inspection.
3. Ensure there is a facility quality review process to monitor and document the inspection and maintenance audit tool at minimum on a quarterly basis (e.g., Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee; Quality Improvement Committee, or Board Audit Committee).
4. Implement a door check system for "high risk" doors that are to be kept locked (e.g., service areas, stairwells, etc.), and check those doors on a minimum of a daily basis to ensure that they remain secured.
5. Review technological solutions such as coded keypads or swipe pads for "high risk" doors that require regular staff access.
6. Consider installing technological solutions that will immediately notify staff when a secure door is opened.
7. Increase awareness of staff, family council and visitors of the importance of maintaining the security of residents through appropriate communications initiatives such as posters, bulletins and training.
8. Implement an awareness notification at each entrance and exit door that is secured.
9. Implement technological solutions for residents who are at risk of accessing "high risk" doors (e.g. wander guard alert systems).

This safety bulletin is jointly issued by:

Sue Bedford
Director of Licensing
Home, Community and Integrated Care
Health Authorities Division

Leigh Ann Seller
Executive Director
Home, Community and Integrated Care
Health Authorities Division