

# Small Unlicensed Adult Care Homes– Recommendations to Promote the Well-being of Residents

Public Health Inspectors work with caregivers, clients, agencies, and home owners to ensure that a healthy and safe environment is provided for those living in adult care homes. This document highlights some standards and best practices.

## Housing

The Housing Regulation and the Minimum Housing and Health Standards *may* apply to small, unlicensed adult care homes. Home owners are responsible for meeting these requirements. Together, the Regulation and Standards are intended to protect and promote the health and well-being of residents and neighbors.

Copies of the Regulation and Standards can be found at <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/eph/Page3150.aspx> . Some standards include:

- Ensure the building is in good repair. Musty odours, or water stained or rotting building materials, may indicate maintenance issues.
- Maintain a comfortable temperature at all times. If the occupants cannot control the temperature themselves, it should be set at no colder than 22 C.
- Ensure windows and exterior doors can be secured, without blocking escape during an emergency.
- If the building does not have a sprinkler system, bedroom windows should be large and easy to open, in case of emergency. See the Minimum Housing and Health Standards or speak with the local Fire Department for specifics.
- Maintain stairways free of clutter, and ensure the steps are in good repair with secure handrails, to prevent falls.
- Ensure there are no pests. Check regularly for evidence of pests such as mouse droppings, and blood spots on mattresses from bed bugs.

## Other best practices for adult care homes

### Hygiene

- Each client should have their own washcloths and towels. Personal care items should not be shared between clients.
- Client's beds should be clean and sanitary. A protective mattress cover should be used if the client has continence problems.
- Dispose of garbage and recycling as appropriate, to prevent problems with odors and pests.

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### Animals

- Animals should not be allowed in food preparation or food storage areas.
- Animal food, equipment, cleaning tools and other animal-related supplies should be stored separately from food preparation or food storage areas.
- Clients and staff should wash hands after handling animals, animal waste, or any animal-related supplies.
- Routine vet examinations and vaccinations for all animals should be kept up to date.

### Food Safety

- Practice safe food handling with these simple steps:
- Clean. Wash your hands often and always before you touch food. Keep your knives, cutting boards, and counters clean. You can wash them with hot, soapy water, or put items in the dishwasher and use a disinfectant on your counter. Wash fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Separate. Keep germs from raw meat from getting on fruits, vegetables, and other foods. Put cooked meat on a clean platter, not back on the one that held the raw meat.
- Cook. Make sure that meat, chicken, fish, and eggs are fully cooked.
- Chill. Refrigerate leftovers right away. Don't leave cut fruits and vegetables at room temperature for a long time.
- When in doubt, throw it out. If you aren't sure if food is safe, do not eat it.

For more information, visit

<https://myhealth.alberta.ca/health/pages/conditions.aspx?hwid=te4626>

- For free online basic food safety courses, visit the AHS Environmental Public Health webpage at <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/eph/Page3151.aspx>

### General Safety

- Clean and disinfect general surfaces regularly. Refer to Appendix D of the [Health and Safety Information Guide for Adult Care Facilities](#) for more information.
- Keep the home free from clutter and excess garbage to minimize odor and prevent pests.
- Check the temperature of hot water at fixtures with a thermometer to make sure maximum temperatures are not too high. Bath and shower water temperatures should not exceed 49°C. Other taps should not exceed 54°C.
- Fire extinguishers and carbon monoxide detectors are recommended.
- A first aid kit should be accessible at all times.
- Avoiding falls is a proactive way to prevent injuries. Information on falls prevention is available in the [Alberta Health Services Falls Prevention Guide](#)

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- Consider client abilities and vulnerabilities when determining whether chemicals and medications should be locked up, or inaccessible to residents.
- A puncture-resistant container for sharps disposal should be available when sharps are routinely used.
- The furnace should be serviced every two years.
- Combustibles should be away from hot water tanks and furnaces.

### Resources

1. Public Health Act and Regulations, Alberta Queen’s Printer website:  
[http://www.qp.alberta.ca/Laws\\_Online.cfm](http://www.qp.alberta.ca/Laws_Online.cfm)
2. First Aid Requirements and First Aid Kits, Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Act:  
<http://work.alberta.ca/documents/OHS-Tool-Kit-Small-Business.pdf>
3. Environmental Public Health Online Resources and Training Courses, Alberta Health Services website:  
<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/eph/Page3151.aspx>
4. Health and Safety Guidelines for Adult Care Facilities. Alberta Health Services website:  
<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/eph/Page8302.aspx>

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Contact us at 1-833-476-4743 or [submit a request online](#) at [ahs.ca/eph](https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/eph).

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