59A-4.133 Plans Submission and Review and Construction Standards.

(1) When construction is contemplated for new buildings or for additions, conversions, renovations, or alterations to existing buildings, the plans and specifications for the contemplated construction shall be prepared by Florida-registered architects and engineers.

(2) All contemplated additions, conversions, renovations, or alterations shall be submitted for approval or exemption from the plans review process.

(3) Plans and specifications submitted for review shall be subject to a plan review fee. This fee is prescribed by statute and is as follows.

(a) The amount of the plan review fee for the portion of the review through the first revised construction document review shall not exceed 1 percent of the total estimated cost of the construction project. A cost estimate of the proposed construction shall be submitted by the Florida-registered architect or Florida-registered engineer who is the primary design professional for the project.

(b) An initial fee payment is due with the first submission of plans and specifications to the AHCA. This initial payment shall be 1 percent of the estimated construction cost or $10,000, whichever is less, but shall in no case be less than $2,000.00. A $2,000.00 portion of the initial fee payment is non-refundable.

(c) The AHCA shall also collect its actual cost on all subsequent portions of the plan reviews and construction inspections.

(d) All fees shall be paid by check made payable to the Treasurer, State of Florida, with the check noted and identified that it is for the AHCA Plans and Review Trust Fund. Fees will be accepted only from the licensee or prospective licensee.

(4) Plans and specifications for contemplated new buildings or additions, conversions, renovations, or alterations which affect the structural integrity, life or fire safety, or use of space of existing buildings shall be submitted in three stages as follows:

(a) First Stage – Schematic Plans, which shall, at a minimum, include the following:
   1. A list of services to be provided in the proposed constructions;
   2. A schedule showing total number of beds; types of bedrooms such as private, semi-private, etc.; and types of ancillary spaces;
   3. Single line drawings of each floor which show the relationship of the various activities or services to each other and the room arrangement in each. The name of each room shall be noted;
   4. The proposed roads, walks, service and entrance courts, parking, and orientation shall be shown on either a small plot plan or the first floor plan;
   5. A simple cross section diagram of the building; and
   6. If the proposed construction is an addition to or is otherwise related to existing buildings on the site, the plans shall show the facilities and general arrangement of those buildings.

(b) Second Stage – Preliminary Plans, Design Development Drawing, which shall, at a minimum, include the following:
   1. Civil engineering plans – show existing grade structure and proposed improvements. Provide a vicinity map;
   2. Architectural plans – provide floor plan, 1/8” scale preferred. Show door swings, windows, case work and millwork, fixed equipment, and plumbing fixtures. Indicate function of each space. Provide large plan of typical new bedroom. Provide typical large scale wall interior and exterior section and exterior wall elevations;
   3. Life safety plans – provide single sheet floor plans of both contemplated and existing areas, showing fire and smoke compartmentation, all means of egress, all exit markings, and a description of exterior egress lighting. Dimension the compartments, calculate and tabulate exit units, and poché unsprinklered areas;
   4. Mechanical engineering plans – provide one line diagram of the ventilating system with relative pressures of each space. Provide, at a minimum, in outline form, a description or drawing of the anticipated emergency smoke control, passive or active, and system operation, correlated with the life safety plans;
   5. Electrical engineering drawings – provide one line diagram of essential electrical system showing both normal and alternate power supplies, service entrances, switchboards, transfer switches, distribution and panel boards, and
description of loads. Show zoned fire alarm correlated with the life safety plans;

6. Outline specifications – provide a general description of the construction, including construction classification and rate of components, interior finishes, general types and locations of acoustical material, floor coverings, hardware groups, electrical equipment, ventilating equipment, and plumbing fixtures;

7. If conversion of an existing building to a nursing home is contemplated, the general layout of space of the existing structure shall be submitted; and

8. If addition, alteration, renovation, or remodeling to a new or existing facility is proposed, the plans for that existing building shall be submitted.

(c) Third Stage – Construction Documents.

1. The construction documents shall be an extension of the Second Stage-Preliminary Plans submittal and shall completely describe the construction contemplated.

2. In the case of additions to new or existing facilities, it is specifically required that mechanical and electrical conditions, including essential electrical systems, be a part of this submittal.

5) The AHCA shall approve or disapprove Third Stage submittals within 60 days of receipt of those documents.

(a) Disapproval of Third Stage submittals because of noncompliance with required codes or the provisions of these rules will automatically terminate the run of the 60 day time period; subsequent resubmissions of the project will initiate another 60 day response period.

(b) A lack of response within 90 days from the date of disapproval of the Third Stage submittals will constitute abandonment of the project.

6) Construction work shall not be started until written approval has been given by the AHCA and must be started within one year following written approval of the construction documents. If construction work is not started within this time period, reapproval must be obtained.

7) All subsequent addenda, change orders, field orders, and contractor letters altering the approved Construction Documents shall be submitted to the AHCA for approval. Any deviation from approved submittals shall require written approval from the AHCA.

8) Construction inspections.

(a) All construction projects shall be inspected and approved by the AHCA prior to occupancy.

(b) The prospective licensee shall notify the AHCA a minimum of 30 days prior to project completion for inspection scheduling.

(9) Construction standards.

(a) For the purposes of these rules, new facility shall be defined as:

1. All new facilities which are constructed for the purpose of operating a nursing home according to Second Stage – Preliminary Plans approved by the AHCA subsequent to April 3, 1995.

2. All conversions of existing buildings from other occupancies which are converted for the purpose of operating a nursing home according to Second Stage – Preliminary Plans approved by the AHCA subsequent to April 3, 1995.

3. All buildings previously licensed under the requirements of Chapter 400, Part I, F.S., but not licensed during the 12 calendar months prior to April 3, 1995.

4. All new construction additions to facilities according to Second Stage – Preliminary Plans approved by the AHCA subsequent to April 3, 1995.

(10) For the purposes of these rules, existing facility shall be defined as:

(a) All facilities in operation prior to April 3, 1995.

(b) All facilities with Second Stage – Preliminary Plans approved by the AHCA prior to April 3, 1995.

(11) A licensee for a new facility shall comply with all the following technical codes and standards which are adopted by reference:

(a) The fire codes described in Chapter 4A-3, F.A.C.;

(b) Building Construction Standards in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 553, F.S.;

(c) "Duct Construction," Chapter 1 of ASHRAE Guide and Data Book, 1986 Edition, Equipment, American Society of Heating, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Engineers; and

(d) I.E.S. Lighting Handbook, Application Volume and Reference Volume, Illuminating Engineering Society of North
(e) The following Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning Contractors’ National Association, Inc., Standards:

(12) A licensee of an existing facility shall comply with the requirements listed in Table I excluding those requirements identified by an asterisk.

(a) A licensee shall complete required alterations within a time schedule approved by the AHCA.
(b) Failure of a licensee to complete alterations within the approved time schedule shall constitute a violation of this subsection.

(13) Local codes which set more stringent standards or add additional requirements shall take precedence over the standards and requirements set forth in this rule.

(14) No currently licensed and operating facility, either previously conforming or nonconforming or as originally approved by the AHCA shall reduce its current degree of compliance with these standards.

(15) Each facility shall comply, as appropriate, with the standards in Tables I, II, and III, hereby incorporated by reference. Tables I, II, and III may be obtained from the Agency for Health Care Administration, Long Term Care Section, 2727 Mahan Drive, Tallahassee, Florida 32308.

(16) All facilities shall comply with the following standards:
(a) All operable windows shall be equipped with well fitted insect screens not less than 16 mesh per inch.
(b) Throw rugs or scatter rugs shall not be used in the facility. Floor mats are allowed in the facility.
(c) Interior corridor doors, except for those small closets and janitors’ closets, shall not swing into corridors.
(d) The temperature of hot water supplied to resident use lavatories, showers, and baths shall be between 105 degrees Fahrenheit and 115 degrees Fahrenheit.
(e) Forced fresh air ventilation shall be provided to all rooms and spaces as required in Table I.
(f) Laundry facilities, if provided, shall be separated from resident and food service areas, shall be self-contained and shall not be accessible through any other room. The layout of the laundry shall provide a soiled holding room and shall provide for the separation of clean and soiled functions with partitions and doors. Plumbing fixtures and trim shall be in accordance with Table III.
(g) All spaces occupied by people, machinery, and equipment within buildings, approaches to buildings, and parking lots shall be provided with artificial lighting commensurate with the tasks to be performed in, and the function intended for, the space.
(h) Ceiling mounted racks and cubicle curtains shall be provided for privacy at each bed in multiple occupancy resident bedrooms. In instances where the use of cubicle curtains is contraindicated by the resident’s condition or the attending physician’s orders, the facility shall make provision for an alternate, effective method for ensuring resident privacy, approved by the AHCA. In facilities where portable screens have been accepted by the AHCA in lieu of ceiling mounted tacks and cubicle curtains, such screens may continue to be used.
(i) All facilities shall be supplied with potable water which is in compliance with the provisions of Chapter 62-550 or 64E-8, F.A.C., whichever is applicable. Whenever a municipal or community water supply is available to the property, such water supply shall be used in lieu of installing a privately owned water system.
(j) A safe method of sewage collection, treatment, and disposal shall be provided for each nursing home and shall be in compliance with the provisions of Chapter 62-600 or 64E-6, F.A.C., whichever is applicable. Whenever a municipal or public sewer system is available to the property, such system shall be used.
(k) All windows in resident bedrooms shall be provided with light control devices appropriate to the needs of the residents occupying the room.
(l) All ice making equipment installed in resident access areas subsequent to April 1, 1982, shall be the self-
dispensing type.

(m) All wiring for power and light feeders, subfeeders and branch circuits in the normal, emergency, essential, and equipment systems including nurse call, emergency communication, alarm, and alerting systems, shall be installed in metal raceways except: Schedule 40 PVC minimum conduit may be used:
   1. In underground or in concrete slabs.
   2. For ungrounded, isolated power branch.
   3. Above non-fire rated ceilings and where ceiling cavity is not used for a return air plenum.

(17) Alterations:
   (a) If, within a period of 12 months, alterations, conversions, renovations, or repairs, costing in excess of 50 percent of the then physical value of the nonconforming building as determined by the sponsor, architect, or engineer and approved by the AHCA are made, such buildings shall be made to conform to each and every standard for a new facility.
   (b) If a nonconforming building is damaged by fire or otherwise, in excess of 50 percent of its then physical value before such damage is repaired, it shall be made to conform to each and every standard for a new facility.
   (c) If the cost of such alterations, conversions, renovations, or repairs, or the amount of such damage is more than 25 percent but not more than 50 percent of the then physical value of the nonconforming building, the degree of compliance with new facility standards shall be determined by the AHCA.
   (d) Alterations, renovations, or repairs not covered by the three preceding paragraphs to restore a nonconforming building to its condition previous to damage or deterioration shall minimally meet standards for new facilities.

(18) Physical Plant Requirements for Disaster Preparedness of New Nursing Home Construction.
   (a) Definitions. The following definitions shall apply specifically to all new facilities as used in subsection 59A-4.133(18), F.A.C.:
      1. “New facility” means a nursing home, or an addition of a wing or floor to an existing nursing home, which has not received a Stage II Preliminary Plan approval pursuant to Chapter 59A-4, F.A.C., prior to the effective date of this rule. Interior renovation, refurbishing, modifications or conversions inside of an existing structure licensed as a nursing home, shall not have to meet the standards contained in this paragraph;
      2. “Net square footage” means the clear floor space of an area excluding cabinetry and other fixed furniture or equipment;
      3. “During and immediately following” means a period of 72 hours following the loss of normal support utilities to the facility;
      4. “Occupied resident area(s)” means the location of residents inside of the new facility or in the addition of a wing or floor to an existing facility during and immediately following a disaster;
      5. “Building code” means the building codes as described in Section 553.73, F.S.
      6. “Resident support area(s)” means the area(s) required to ensure the health, safety and well-being of residents during and immediately following a disaster, such as a nursing station, clean and soiled utility areas, food preparation area, and other areas as determined by the facility.
   (b) New Facility Construction Standards. The following construction standards are in addition to the physical plant requirements described in subsections (1) through (11) of Rule 59A-4.133, F.A.C. These minimum standards are intended to increase the ability of the new facility to be structurally capable of serving as a shelter for residents, staff and the family of residents and staff and equipped to be self-supporting during and immediately following a disaster:
      1. Space Standards.
         a. For planning purposes, as estimated by the facility, each new facility shall provide a minimum of 30 net square feet per resident served in the occupied resident area(s).
         b. As determined by the facility, space for administrative and support activities shall be provided for use by facility staff to allow for care of residents in the occupied resident area(s).
         c. As determined by the facility, space shall be provided for all staff and family members of residents and staff.
      2. Site standards.
         a. All new facilities and additions to existing facilities shall be located above the 100-year flood plain or hurricane Category 3 (Saffir-Simpson scale) hurricane surge inundation elevation, whichever requires the highest elevation, or;
         b. The floor elevation of all new occupied resident area(s) and all resident support area(s) and resident support
utilities, including mechanical, electrical, and food services shall be located above the 100-year flood plain or hurricane Category 3 (Saffir-Simpson scale) hurricane surge inundation elevations, whichever requires the highest elevation, or

c. New additions or floors added to existing facilities, as determined by their site locations, shall be so designed and constructed as to be in compliance with the current standards of the National Flood Insurance Program of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, incorporated by reference and available from Federal Emergency Management Agency, Federal Insurance Administration, Attn. Publications, P. O. Box 70274, Washington, D.C. 20024.

d. Where an off-site public access route is available to the new facility at or above the 100-year flood plain, a minimum of one on-site emergency access route shall be provided that is located at the same elevation as the public access route;

e. New landscaping elements shall be located so if damaged they will not block the on-site emergency access route to the facility. Outdoor signs and their foundations shall be designed to meet the wind load criteria of the applicable building code;

f. New light standards and their foundations used for lighting the on-site emergency access route shall be designed to meet the wind load criteria of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE 7-95), fifty-year recurrence interval of wind velocity with appropriate exposure category dependent on site location, incorporated by reference and available from the American Society of Civil Engineers, United Engineering Center, 345 East 47th Street, New York, NY 10017-2398.

3. Structural Standards. Wind load design of the building structure and exterior envelope including exterior wall systems shall be designed in accordance with the building code.

4. Roofing Standards.

a. Roofing membrane material shall resist the uplift forces specified in the building code. Roof coverings shall be installed according to the specifications provided by the manufacturer.

b. Loose-laid ballasted roofs shall not be permitted;

c. All new roof appendages such as ducts, tanks, ventilators, receivers, dx condensing units and decorative mansard roofs and their attachment systems shall be structurally engineered to meet the wind load requirements of the applicable building code. All of these attachment systems shall be connected directly to the underlying roof structure or roof support structure.

5. Exterior Unit Standards.

a. All exterior window units, skylights, exterior louvers and exterior door units including vision panels and their anchoring systems shall be designed to resist the wind load requirements of the building code and the debris impact requirements as specified by Section 2315 of the South Florida Building Code, Dade edition 1994, incorporated by reference and available from the Metropolitan Dade County Building Code Compliance Department, 140 West Flagler Street, Suite 1603, Miami, FL 33130.

b. Permanently attached protective systems such as shutters and baffling shall be designed to meet the wind load requirements and the debris impact requirements as specified by Section 2315 of the South Florida Building Code, Dade edition 1994, incorporated by reference and available from the Metropolitan Dade County Building Code Compliance Department, 140 West Flagler Street, Suite 1603, Miami, FL 33130;

c. Removable protective systems designed to intricately fit with the wall/window system of the facility and stored on-site at the facility and that meet the wind load requirements of the building code, and the debris impact requirements specified by Section 2315 of the South Florida Building Code, Dade edition 1994, incorporated by reference and available from the Metropolitan Dade County Building Code Compliance Department, 140 West Flagler Street, Suite 1603, Miami, FL 33130 may be utilized to protect the exterior units;

d. All anchoring and attachment to the building of both the permanently attached and removable protective systems shall be designed to meet wind load requirements of the building code, and the impact requirements specified by Section 2315 of the South Florida Building Code, Dade edition 1994, incorporated by reference and available from the Metropolitan Dade County Building Code Compliance Department, 140 West Flagler Street, Suite 1603, Miami, FL 33130. These designs shall be signed, sealed and dated by a registered structural engineer;

e. The glazed openings inside or outside of the protective systems shall meet the cyclical loading requirements specified by Section 2315 of the South Florida Building Code, Dade edition 1994, incorporated by reference and
f. All of the exterior impact protective systems shall be designed and installed so that they do not come in contact with the glazing under uniform, impact or cyclic pressure loading;

   g. When not being utilized to protect the windows, the protective system shall not restrict the operability of the windows in the occupied resident bedrooms.

   h. When not being utilized to protect the windows, the protective systems shall not reduce the clear window opening below 8% of the gross square footage of the resident room.


   a. Air moving equipment, dx condensing units, through-wall units and other HVAC equipment located outside of or on the roof of the facility shall be permitted only when either of the following are met:

      (I) They are located inside a penthouse designed to meet the wind load requirements of the building code, or;

      (II) Their fastening systems are designed to meet the wind load requirements of the building code and they are protected from impact as specified by Section 2315 of the South Florida Building Code, Dade edition 1994, incorporated by reference and available from the Metropolitan Dade County Building Code Compliance Department, 140 West Flagler Street, Suite 1603, Miami, FL 33130.

   b. All occupied resident areas and resident support areas shall be supplied with sufficient HVAC as determined by the facility to ensure the health, safety and well being of all residents and staff during and immediately following a disaster.

   c. As determined by the facility these selected HVAC systems and their associated support equipment such as a control air compressor essential to the maintenance of the occupied resident and resident support area(s) shall receive their power from the emergency power supply system(s).

   d. Ventilation air change rates in occupied resident areas shall be maintained as specified in Chapter 59A-4, F.A.C., during and immediately following a disaster.

   e. Auxiliary equipment and specialties such as hydronic supply piping and pneumatic control piping shall be located, routed and protected in such a manner as determined by the facility to ensure the equipment receiving the services will not be interrupted.

7. Plumbing Standards.

   a. There shall be an independent on-site supply (i.e., water well) or on-site storage capability of potable water at a minimum quantity of 3 gallons per resident served per day during and immediately following a disaster.

   b. There shall be an independent on-site supply or storage capability of potable water at a minimum quantity of 1 gallon per facility staff, and other personnel in the facility per day during and immediately following a disaster. For planning purposes, the number of these personnel shall be estimated by the facility.

   c. The facility shall determine what amount of water will be sufficient to provide for resident services, and shall maintain an on-site supply or on-site storage of the determined amount.

   d. When utilized to meet the minimum requirements of this rule, selected system appurtenances such as water pressure maintenance house pumps, and emergency water supply well pumps shall take power from the emergency power supply system(s).

8. Medical Gas Systems Standards. The storage, distribution piping system and appurtenances shall be contained within a protected area(s) designed and constructed to meet the structural and debris impact requirements as specified by Section 2315 of the South Florida Building Code, Dade edition 1994, incorporated by reference and available from the Metropolitan Dade County Building Code Compliance Department, 140 West Flagler Street, Suite 1603, Miami, FL 33130.


   a. There shall be an on-site Level I emergency electrical generator system designed to support the occupied resident area(s) and resident support area(s) with at least the following support services:

      (I) Ice making equipment to produce ice for the residents served, or freezer storage equipment for the storage of ice for the residents served;

      (II) Refrigerator unit(s) and food service equipment if required by the emergency food plan;
(III) Life safety and critical branch lighting and systems as required by Chapter 59A-4, F.A.C.;

(IV) Selected HVAC systems as determined by the facility and other systems required by this rule;

b. The emergency generator system shall be fueled by a fuel supply stored on-site sized to fuel the generator for 100 percent load for 64 hours or 72 hours for actual demand load of the occupied resident area(s) and resident support area(s) and resident support utilities during and immediately following a disaster, whichever is greater.

(I) The fuel supply shall either be located below ground or contained within a protected area that is designed and constructed to meet the structural and debris impact requirements as specified by Section 2315 of the South Florida Building Code, Dade edition 1994, incorporated by reference and available from the Metropolitan Dade County Building Code Compliance Department, 140 West Flagler Street, Suite 1603, Miami, FL 33130. If an underground system is utilized, it shall be designed so as to exclude the entrance of any foreign solids or liquids;

(II) All fuel lines supporting the generator system(s) shall be protected also with a method designed and constructed to meet the structural and debris impact requirements as specified by Section 2315 of the South Florida Building Code, Dade edition 1994, incorporated by reference and available from the Metropolitan Dade County Building Code Compliance Department, 140 West Flagler Street, Suite 1603, Miami, FL 33130.

(III) All panel boards, transfer switches, disconnect switches, enclosed circuit breakers or emergency system raceway systems required to support the occupied resident area(s), resident support area(s) or support utilities shall be contained within a protected area(s) designed and constructed to meet the structural and debris impact requirements as specified by Section 2315 of the South Florida Building Code, Dade edition 1994, incorporated by reference and available from the Metropolitan Dade County Building Code Compliance Department, 140 West Flagler Street, Suite 1603, Miami, FL 33130, and shall not rely on systems or devices outside of this protected area(s) for their reliability or continuation of service.

(IV) The emergency generator(s) shall be air or self-contained liquid cooled and it and other essential electrical equipment shall be installed in a protected area(s) designed and constructed to meet the structural and debris impact requirements as specified by Section 2315 of the South Florida Building Code, Dade edition 1994, incorporated by reference and available from the Metropolitan Dade County Building Code Compliance Department, 140 West Flagler Street, Suite 1603, Miami, FL 33130.

10. Fire Protection Standards.

a. If the facility requires fire sprinklers as part of its fire protection, either of the following shall be met:

(I) On site water storage capacity to continue sprinkler coverage, in accordance with the requirements of NFPA 13, 1996 edition, incorporated by reference and available from NFPA, 1 Batterymarch Park, P. O. Box 9101, Quincy, MA 02269-9101 or

(II) If the facility plans to provide a Fire Watch, it shall use the following procedure as approved by the Office of Plans and Construction for all areas of the facility that are without sprinkler coverage due to interrupted water flow.

(A) Notify the local fire department and document instructions.

(B) Notify the Agency through the Area Office.

(C) Assess the extent of the condition and effect correction action, with a documented time frame. If the corrective action will take more than four (4) hours, do the following items:

I. Implement a contingency plan to the facility fire plan containing: a description of the problem, specifically what the system is not doing that it normally does, and the projected correction time frame. All staff on shifts involved shall have documented in-servicing and drilling for the contingency.

II. Begin a documented firewatch, until the system is restored. Persons used for firewatch must be trained in what to look for, what to do, and be able to expeditiously contact the fire department. For a firewatch, a facility can use only: public safety persons (i.e., fire service), a guard service, or staff (e.g., a nurse, maintenance, drill or safety coordinator); if the persons are:

A. Off duty from their regular position; in compliance with current state staffing ratios and personnel policies (i.e., not in a condition that would impair performance);

B. Trained and competent in what to look for and what to do;

C. Have a provision for priority communication (i.e., a radio or special telephone);

D. Notify Agency and local authorities, if the time-frame changes or system is restored.
b. If the facility provides a Fire Watch in lieu of sprinkler on-site water or water storage, then one 4-A type fire extinguisher or equivalent shall be provided for every 3 or less 2-A fire extinguishers required by NFPA 10, 1998 edition, incorporated by reference and available from NFPA, 1 Batterymarch Park, P. O. Box 9101, Quincy, MA 02269-9101, for the area served. These additional extinguishers shall be equally distributed throughout the area they are protecting.

11. External Emergency Communications Standards. Each new facility shall provide for external electronic communication not dependent on terrestrial telephone lines, cellular, radio or microwave towers, such as on-site radio transmitter, satellite communication systems or a written agreement with an amateur radio operator volunteer group(s). This agreement shall provide for a volunteer operator and communication equipment to be re-located into the facility in the event of a disaster until communications are restored. Other methods which can be shown to maintain uninterrupted electronic communications not dependent on land-based transmission shall be pre-approved by the Office of Plans and Construction.

Specific Authority 381.031(1)(g)7., 400.23 FS. Law Implemented 381.031, 400.011(2), 400.021(1)-(17), 400.022(1)-(4), 400.102, 400.141, 400.23 FS. History–New 4-1-82, Amended 4-1-84, 4-29-92, Formerly 10D-29.120, 59A-4.120, Amended 2-6-97, 10-21-99.