

## What You Can Do!

Because you are the Authority Having Jurisdiction, you are the one who can make the biggest difference in the lives of hundreds of elders now living in nursing homes. Many of these elders are of such advanced age they may not live long enough to benefit from these positive Life Safety Code revisions if the routine code adoption process is followed.

That is why the Center for Medicare/Medicaid Services (CMS) has issued a survey direction to all state agencies that certify nursing homes for federal reimbursement to permit a waiver based on these four provisions of the Life Safety Code, 2012 edition. They realize it may take several years to process a rule change from the 2000 edition to the 2012 edition and that this amount of time will be harmful to the elders now living in nursing homes. Because of this, CMS has created a legal method to allow designers to implement these four revisions immediately without waiting for the adoption of the complete 2012 edition.

But many state laws and rules will still not permit the use of these revisions because the 2012 Life Safety Code has not yet been adopted by many states. However, some states are quickly acting to immediately implement these new Life Safety Code revisions, by developing waiver provisions similar to those of CMS so these revisions can be incorporated into current designs.

## AHJ Action

Because the 2012 LSC will not be effective in Florida until the end of 2014, please consider similar actions to allow these four important fire safety provisions of NFPA 101 to be implemented without further delay. NFPA 101, Section 1.4.3 Equivalent Compliance, permits the AHJ to accept "Alternative systems, methods, or devices... as being in compliance with this Code". By accepting these 4 stand alone revisions as equivalent to the 2009 LSC, you will create an immediate and positive effect on the lives of elders who live in the nursing homes you regulate, but who may not live long enough to benefit from these revisions until the date this code is finally enforced in Florida.

For further information on these important changes and for ways to get involved in this historic work, please contact Cathy Lieblich at: [cathy.lieblich@pioneernetwork.net](mailto:cathy.lieblich@pioneernetwork.net).



# Fire Protection Codes for Culture Change

## NFPA 101 LIFE SAFETY CODE 2012 Edition



***Something new and exciting has happened to the Life Safety Code that will forever change nursing home design for the better!***

***The 2012 edition has now made it possible to create home environments for our elders.***



## What the 2012 NFPA 101 Life Safety Code Now Permits

**1. A kitchen** with a cook top for a full range of cooking is permitted to be open to the corridor to allow small and familiar gatherings we all know and love in our own homes.

**Fire safety is maintained by:** Kitchen area limited to 30 beds separated by a smoke barrier, range hood with suppression system with fuel source interlock, no solid fuel or deep-fat frying, secured power switch with timer, two photoelectric smoke alarms, and required kitchen fire extinguishers.

**2. Fixed seating** is permitted within the 8 feet wide corridor width to allow for respite areas along the path of travel and to encourage ambulation.

**Fire Safety is maintained by:** Fixed seating is permitted on one side only, clear corridor width to be no less than 6 feet, seating does not exceed 50 square feet separated by 10 feet, and there are no obstructions to fire protection equipment.

**3. Combustible photographs and decorations or art,** such as hanging objects or three-dimensional items, are allowed to be placed on walls, ceilings and doors within a smoke compartment to create a pleasant environment and to stimulate fond and familiar memories of one's life.

**Fire Safety is maintained by:** These items may be attached directly to a wall, ceiling area, or to a non fire rated door if they do not exceed 20% of those areas inside an unsprinklered smoke compartment, 30% of those areas inside a fully sprinklered smoke compartment and 50% of those areas inside a resident room with 4 or fewer residents inside a fully sprinklered smoke compartment.

**4. A direct vent gas fireplace** is permitted to be located within a small living area open to the resident corridor for a special place of social interaction and warmth.

**Fire Safety is maintained by:** The gas vent fireplace is located inside a fully sprinklered smoke compartment, has a sealed glass front with wire mesh panel, secured power controls, and carbon monoxide detection.

## The Importance of These New Fire Protection Revisions

All too often nursing homes have been designed as medical models like hospitals because of the fire codes required to be followed. But now the NFPA Life Safety Code committees have adopted 4 new standards to support a new design concept often referred to as "culture change". These revised fire codes will encourage and permit designs that replicate the normal living environment of "home" within a health care setting.

For all Elders, especially those with dementia, it is very important that spaces look familiar so an ease of understanding and an ability to function at their highest levels are achieved.

**The positive impact of these revisions for elders cannot be overstated. Benefits to people living in nursing homes include:**

**An increased feeling they are really "at home" due to having kitchens that resemble and function like those they had in their own homes.**

**A renewed ability to navigate those long corridors without using a wheelchair, knowing there is a place to rest.**

**The ability for a resident to have more decorations on the wall and door of her or his bedroom to further personalize the room and maintain connections with family and community.**

**The enjoyment of a real gas vented fireplace that provides warmth and the familiar feeling of home on cold winter days.**

The NFPA LSC committee heard these desires and created revisions to permit such designs in a skilled nursing home while maintaining a high degree of fire safety.