



June 2, 2020

Licensing and Certification has received questions regarding ventilation and circulation in Residential Assisted Living Facilities, in relation to the current COVID-19 pandemic. The Centers for Disease Control has provided guidance for certain businesses, such as bars and restaurants, as follows:

“Ventilation: Ensure that ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible, for example by opening windows and doors and prioritizing outdoor seating. Do not open windows and doors if doing so poses a safety or health risk to customers or employees (e.g., risk of falling or triggering asthma symptoms).” <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/business-employers/bars-restaurants.html>

The American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) has recommendations for healthcare facilities on the issue of air quality, and their website can be viewed at <https://www.ashrae.org/technical-resources/healthcare-faq>. The following statement is found in their FAQ's:

“Applying a combination of increased filter efficiency and increased ventilation rates may be the best way to achieve better indoor air quality and help dilute COVID-19 or other infectious aerosol concentrations indoors. Facility operators and building owners should consult a local HVAC engineer or service professional to help them make these kinds of operational changes to their HVAC systems.”

One consultant stated the more fresh air is brought in, the better to dilute viruses in the air. However, if a person is COVID infected, you would not want to push air out into the hallway. (Therefore, no fans should be used in the window for suspected or confirmed COVID+ residents). Otherwise, a resident leaving their window open, would be acceptable, weather permitting and assuming there was no risk to the resident (such as elopement in a memory care unit). Also, if the resident sees visitors through an open window, the visitor and resident should remain 6 feet apart during the visit. It was also noted by the consultant that bathroom ventilators which vent to the outside can also help with air exchange.

Again, we encourage you to seek the guidance of your HVAC professional for further measures to safely improve ventilation in your facility. Please feel free to contact our office at 208-364-1962 if you have any questions or concerns.

Regards,

The Residential Assisted Living Facilities Program