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PLI Code Bulletin - Care within a Single-Family Dwelling or Two-Family Dwelling

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SUBJECT OF INTERPRETATION

This Bulletin addresses the question of whether an automatic sprinkler system is required for custodial and/or medical care for five (5) or fewer individuals within a single-family dwelling or two-family dwelling.

APPLICABILITY

This interpretation shall apply to all permits within the City of Pittsburgh for the following type of custodial or medical care: alcohol and drug centers, assisted living facilities, congregate care facilities, group homes, halfway houses, residential board and care facilities, social rehabilitation facilities, foster care facilities, detoxification facilities, nursing homes, and psychiatric facilities when provided for five (5) or fewer individuals within a single-family dwelling, two-family dwelling, or townhouse regulated by the current *International Residential Code (IRC)* or *International Building Code (IBC)*. The Bulletin shall apply to this topic, including under subsequent versions of the referenced code/standard, until the current PLI Building Code Official (BCO) modifies and/or rescinds the interpretation.

INTERPRETATION

While *IBC* allows custodial and/or medical care for five (5) or fewer individuals to be regulated by the *IRC*, this is permitted “provided an automatic sprinkler system is installed...”¹ Note the sprinkler system is required to be installed and designed per the *NFPA 13D* or *IRC P2904* standard. The sprinkler

¹ 2015 *IBC* Sections 308.3.4 and 308.4.2

system is required to provide protection of occupants who require supervision and may not be able to egress a building without assistance.

BASIS FOR INTERPRETATION

The *IBC* generally regulates custodial care provided on a 24-hour basis as a Group I-1 occupancy classification² and medical care provided on a 24-hour basis who are incapable of self-preservation as a Group I-2 occupancy classification³. The *IBC* requires Group I occupancies to be provided with automatic sprinkler systems to allow for additional protection of occupants who require supervision and may not be able to egress a building without assistance.⁴

The *IBC* also identifies that when custodial or medical care is provided to five (5) or fewer individuals these uses can be assigned a Group R-3 occupancy or comply with the *IRC* “provided an automatic sprinkler system is installed...”¹ This requirement maintains the basic *IBC* protection provided for occupants when classified as Group I occupancy but allows for the sprinkler system standard to be modified due to the number of occupants. If the care facility is classified as a Group R-3 occupancy, the automatic sprinkler system is to be designed and installed per *NFPA 13D*.⁵ If the care facility is regulated under the *IRC*, the automatic sprinkler system is to be installed and designed per *NFPA 13D*⁶ or *IRC* P2904. Note the P2904 standard is considered an equivalent to the *NFPA 13D*.⁷

² 2015 *IBC* Section 308.3

³ 2015 *IBC* Section 308.4

⁴ 2015 *IBC* Section 903.2.6

⁵ 2015 *IBC* Section 903.2.8.1

⁶ 2015 *IBC* Section 903.3.1.3

⁷ 2015 *IRC* P2904