

NOTICE

Changes to Minimum Housing and Health Standards Impacts Alberta's Safety System

Recent amendments to the Minimum Housing and Health Standards enhance the ability of Executive Officers (Public Health Inspectors or Environmental Health Officers) to address safety concerns within buildings through consultation with Safety Codes Officers.

The Minimum Housing and Health Standards, in association with the *Housing Regulation* and pursuant to the *Public Health Act*, applies to rental accommodations. This legislation, enforced by Executive Officers from Alberta Health Services, has been amended, effective January 1, 2013. Changes involve egress, handrails and ventilation requirements. These amendments maintain the ability of Executive Officers to address human health risks while providing additional flexibility to consider information from Safety Codes Officers. It is expected that enhanced collaboration will result in improved understanding by property owners of their obligation to provide a safe environment within their facility.

The impact of these changes is not entirely without precedent as Executive Officers and Safety Codes Officers have a long history of collaboration. However, it is anticipated that these changes will generate more opportunities to exchange expertise in the future. Municipal Affairs is very supportive of this effort and will provide support and technical advice to Alberta Health Services and Accredited Municipalities. Municipal Affairs encourages municipal involvement because experience shows that local involvement produces superior solutions in these matters. Municipal Affairs is available to assist municipalities and can be contacted toll free at 1-866-421-6929 or safety.services@gov.ab.ca.

It is important to note these changes do not reduce the ability of Executive Officers or Safety Codes Officers to act on matters of safety within the built environment. Instead these changes provide new tools in determining appropriate steps to address health risks within the built environment.

For your reference, a copy of the Minimum Housing and Health Standards can be accessed through the following link:

<http://www.health.alberta.ca/documents/Standards-Housing-Minimum.pdf>

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For further information contact the Safety Services Branch toll-free at 1-866-421-6929.

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