

DIRECTOR'S RULING

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Wandering Patient Security Systems

DISCUSSION

Patients, in institutional occupancies, who suffer from Alzheimer's Disease or other mentally debilitating afflictions, often run the risk of accident or serious injury by wandering away from supervised areas without the institutional staff being aware of their leaving. Often the patient uses an emergency exit to leave by.

Security systems are now available that are designed to reduce the risk of patients wandering from unsupervised areas through exit or access to exit doors. These types of systems include a device to be worn by the patient which transmits a signal to a specially equipped exit door. As the patient approaches, the device causes the door to lock automatically. When the patient moves away, the door returns to its unlocked condition. For purposes of this Standata these systems are identified as wandering patient security systems.

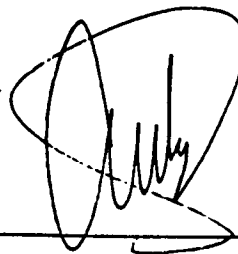
RULING

Wandering patient security systems are acceptable for use in Group B, Division 1 or 2, institutional occupancies to protect cognitively impaired patients from wandering provided:

- 1) the security system will not cause doors to lock when a fire alarm has been activated,

ISSUE OF THIS RULING IS AUTHORIZED
UNDER ARTICLE 1.5.7.4. OF THE ALBERTA
BUILDING CODE 1990 BY THE DIRECTOR,
BUILDING STANDARDS.

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- 2) the security system will not cause doors to lock in the event of a power failure,
- 3) the system may be overridden at the door by staff or the public using a switch or code key punch pad,
- 4) the area protected by the security system is supervised by staff whenever patients may be expected to be present,
- 5) the door latching devices do not include strikes,
- 6) if the hardware is to be installed on a door that is required to have a fire protection rating, the rating is not voided by addition of the hardware,
- 7) if the door is to be locked for a specific length of time when triggered by a wandering patient, the length of time does not exceed 15 s.
- 8) the doors controlled by wandering patient security systems are posted with a sign to explain to staff and to the public
 - (a) that patients in close proximity to the door may cause it to lock automatically, and
 - (b) the method of by-passing the lock in order to open the door.

This RULING applies throughout the Province of Alberta.

