

**RULES GOVERNING
THE SANITATION OF
RESIDENTIAL CARE
FACILITIES
15A NCAC 18A .1600**

**North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Public Health
Environmental Health Section**

**Effective February 1, 1976
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All Environmental Health Rules may be accessed online at:
<http://ehs.ncpublichealth.com/rules.htm>

SECTION .1600 - SANITATION OF RESIDENTIAL CARE FACILITIES

Rules .1601 - .1622 of Title 15A Subchapter 18A of the North Carolina Administrative Code(T15A.18A .1601 - .1622); has been transferred and recodified from Rules .0201 - .0222 of Title 10 Subchapter 10A of the North Carolina Administrative Code (T10.10A .0201 - .0222), effective April 4, 1990.

15A NCAC 18A .1601 DEFINITIONS

The following definitions shall apply throughout this Section:

- (1) "Administrator" means the person designated by the licensee to be responsible for the daily operation of the residential care facility.
- (2) "Bed linens" means bed sheets, pillowcases, mattress covers, blankets, and duvet covers.
- (3) "Clean" means that an object or surface has been made free of garbage, solid waste, soil, dust, hair, dander, food, bodily fluids and secretions, and feces.
- (4) "Department" means the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services.
- (5) "Disinfectant" means a disinfectant as defined at 40 C.F.R. 158.2203 that has been registered with the United States Environmental Protection Agency in accordance with 40 C.F.R. 152, which are hereby incorporated by reference, including any subsequent amendments or editions, and are available free of charge at <https://www.ecfr.gov/>.
- (6) "Good repair" means as defined at 15A NCAC 18A .2651(8). Items that are in good repair shall operate in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- (7) "Licensing agency" means the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Health Service Regulation.
- (8) "Linen" means bath towels, hand drying towels, bed linens, and pillows.
- (9) "Non-community water supply" means as defined in G.S. 130A-313(10).
- (10) "Pest" means as defined in G.S. 143-460(26a).
- (11) "Pest harborage" means any condition that provides water or food and shelter for pests.
- (12) "Regulatory authority" means the Department or authorized agent of the Department.
- (13) "Resident" means a person, other than the administrator, his or her immediate family, and residential care facility employees, who is residing in a residential care facility.
- (14) "Residential care facility" means an establishment providing room or board and for which a license or certificate for payment is obtained from the Department, but does not include a child day care facility or an institution as defined in 15A NCAC 18A .1301.
- (15) "Solid waste" means as defined in G.S. 130A-290(35).
- (16) "Time/Temperature Control for Safety Food" or "TCS Food" means as defined in Part 1-2 of the Food Code incorporated by reference at 15A NCAC 18A .2650 as amended by 15A NCAC 18A .2651.

History Note: Authority G.S. 130A-4; 130A-235;
Eff. February 1, 1976;
Readopted Eff. December 5, 1977;
Amended Eff. July 1, 1993; September 1, 1990; March 1, 1988; July 1, 1984;
Temporary Amendment Eff. May 5, 1998;
Temporary Amendment Expired January 26, 1999;
Amended Eff. November 1, 2002;
Readopted Eff. April 1, 2024.

15A NCAC 18A .1602 APPROVAL OF PLANS

*History Note: Authority G.S. 130A-235;
Eff. February 1, 1976;
Readopted Eff. December 5, 1977;
Amended Eff. September 1, 1990;
Repealed Eff. April 1, 2024.*

15A NCAC 18A .1603 INSPECTIONS

(a) The regulatory authority shall inspect residential care facilities at least once a year prior to the expiration of the residential care facility's license issued by the licensing agency. The Department shall provide a copy of the inspection form to the administrator of the facility.

(b) The inspection of institutions shall be documented on an inspection form provided by the Department. The form shall include at least the following information:

- (1) name and address of the residential care facility;
- (2) name of licensee;
- (3) an explanation for all demerits incurred during the inspection;
- (4) classification in accordance with Rule .1606 of this Section;
- (5) the date on which the inspection is conducted; and
- (6) the signature of the regulatory authority.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 130A-4; 130A-235;
Eff. February 1, 1976;
Readopted Eff. December 5, 1977;
Amended Eff. July 1, 1993;
Readopted Eff. April 1, 2024.*

15A NCAC 18A .1604 REINSPECTIONS: VISITS

The regulatory authority may reinspect or visit residential care facilities at any time to ensure compliance with these Rules. When the administrator requests an inspection of their facility to improve a classification the regulatory authority shall make an unannounced inspection within 30 days.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 130A-4; 130A-235;
Eff. February 1, 1976;
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Amended Eff. September 1, 1990;
Readopted Eff. April 1, 2024.*

15A NCAC 18A .1605 INSPECTION FORMS

*History Note: Authority G.S. 130A-235;
Eff. February 1, 1976;
Readopted Eff. December 5, 1977;
Amended Eff. September 1, 1990; June 30, 1980;
Repealed Eff. April 1, 2024.*

15A NCAC 18A .1606 SCORING SYSTEM

(a) Residential care facility sanitation scores shall be based upon the standards of construction and operation set out in Rules .1607 through .1621 of this Section.

(b) The score of the facility shall be classified as follows:

- (1) "Approved" if the demerit score is less than 40 and no six-demerit item is violated; and
- (2) "Disapproved" if the demerit score is 40 or greater, or if any six-demerit item is violated.

(c) The sanitation score is the total amount determined by adding demerits for each item found not to be in compliance with the rules of this Section. The demerit value of each item is determined as follows:

- (1) Violation of Rule .1607 of this Section regarding the cleanliness of floors and carpet shall equal two demerits and repair of floors and carpet shall equal one demerit.
- (2) Violation of Rule .1608 of this Section regarding the cleanliness of walls, ceilings, and attachments shall equal two demerits and repair of walls, ceilings, and attachments shall equal one demerit.
- (3) Violation of Rule .1609(a) of this Section regarding the illumination of required spaces shall equal two demerits.
- (4) Violation of Rule .1609(b) of this Section regarding the cleanliness and state of repair of windows, fixtures, and ventilation equipment shall equal two demerits.
- (5) Violation of Rule .1610(a) of this Section regarding the availability of toileting, handwashing, and bathing facilities shall equal five demerits.
- (6) Violation of Rule .1610(a) of this Section regarding the cleanliness and state of repair of toileting, handwashing, and bathing facilities shall equal four demerits.
- (7) Violation of Rule .1610(b) of this Section regarding the handwashing sink design shall equal four demerits.
- (8) Violation of Rule .1610(b) of this Section regarding the supply and storage provisions in bathrooms shall equal four demerits.
- (9) Violation of Rule .1611(a) of this Section regarding the water supply shall equal six demerits.
- (10) Violation of Rule .1611(c) of this Section regarding cross-connections shall equal five demerits.
- (11) Violation of Rule .1611(d) of this Section regarding the pressure availability and temperature of water at fixtures shall equal four demerits.
- (12) Violation of Rule .1613 of this Section regarding liquid waste disposal shall equal six demerits.
- (13) Violation of Rule .1614(a) of this Section regarding the locations of storage waste disposal shall equal two demerits.
- (14) Violation of Rule .1614(b) of this Section regarding the covering, cleanliness, and state of repair of solid waste containers shall equal two demerits.
- (15) Violation of Rule .1614(c) of this Section regarding solid waste disposal frequency shall equal two demerits.
- (16) Violation of Rule .1615(a) of this Section regarding pest presence shall equal three demerits.
- (17) Violation of Rule .1615(a) of this Section regarding the prevention of harborage conditions shall equal two demerits.
- (18) Violation of Rule .1615(a) of this Section regarding the state of repair of outdoor furniture shall equal two demerits.
- (19) Violation of Rule .1616 of this Section regarding the storage of substances shall equal four demerits.
- (20) Violation of Rule .1617(a) of this Section regarding the cleanliness of furnishings shall equal two demerits.
- (21) Violation of Rule .1617(a) of this Section regarding the state of repair of furnishings shall equal two demerits.
- (22) Violation of Rule .1617(b) of this Section regarding the provisions and state of repair of bed linens shall equal four demerits.
- (23) Violation of Rule .1617(b) of this Section regarding the cleanliness and cleaning frequency of bed linens shall equal four demerits.
- (24) Violation of Rule .1617(c) of this Section regarding the storage of clean linen shall equal three demerits.
- (25) Violation of Rule .1617(d) of this Section regarding the cleanliness and state of repair of laundry areas and equipment shall equal three demerits.

- (26) Violation of Rule .1618(a) of this Section regarding the state of repair of food utensils and equipment, except temperature holding equipment, shall equal three demerits.
- (27) Violation of Rule .1618(b) of this Section regarding the cleanliness of food utensils and equipment shall equal four demerits.
- (28) Violation of Rule .1618(b) of this Section regarding the cleanliness of the non-food contact sides of equipment shall equal two demerits.
- (29) Violation of Rule .1618(c) of this Section regarding the storage of equipment and utensils shall equal two demerits.
- (30) Violation of Rule .1618(d) of this Section regarding the provisions for ware washing shall equal five demerits.
- (31) Violation of Rule .1618(e) of this Section regarding the cleanliness of food storage areas shall equal three demerits.
- (32) Violation of Rule .1619 of this Section regarding the safety and approved sources of foods shall equal five demerits.
- (33) Violation of Rule .1620(a) of this Section regarding the time and temperature control of food shall equal five demerits.
- (34) Violation of Rule .1620(b) of this Section regarding the prohibitions of live pets shall equal no more than three demerits.
- (35) Violation of Rule .1620(c) of this Section regarding the provisions and state of repair of temperature holding equipment shall equal five demerits.
- (36) Violation of Rule .1620(c) of this Section regarding the availability of accurate temperature indicating devices shall equal no more than two demerits.
- (37) Violation of Rule .1620(d) of this Section regarding the storage of food shall equal four demerits,
- (38) Violation of Rule .1621(a) of this Section regarding handwashing methods shall equal four demerits.
- (39) Violation of Rule .1621(b) of this Section regarding when to wash hands shall equal four demerits.
- (40) Violation of Rule .1621(c) of this Section regarding restricting or excluding employees shall equal five demerits.
- (41) Violation of Rule .1621(d) of this Section regarding cleaning supplies and written procedures for responding to vomiting or diarrheal events shall equal two demerits.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 130A-4; 130A-235;
Eff. February 1, 1976;
Readopted Eff. December 5, 1977;
Amended Eff. July 1, 1993; January 1, 1978;
Readopted Eff. April 1, 2024.*

15A NCAC 18A .1607 FLOORS

All floors shall be kept clean and in good repair.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 130A-4; 130A-235;
Eff. February 1, 1976;
Readopted Eff. December 5, 1977;
Readopted Eff. April 1, 2024.*

15A NCAC 18A .1608 WALLS AND CEILINGS

- (a) The interior walls and ceilings, including doors, window, and window trim, shall be kept clean and in good repair.
- (b) Wall and ceiling attachments, such as light fixtures, fans, and vent covers, shall be kept clean and in good repair.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 130A-4; 130A-235;
Eff. February 1, 1976;
Readopted Eff. December 5, 1977;
Readopted Eff. April 1, 2024.*

15A NCAC 18A .1609 LIGHTING AND VENTILATION

- (a) All rooms shall be illuminated by natural or artificial means.
- (b) Ventilation equipment shall be kept clean and in good repair.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 130A-4; 130A-235;
Eff. February 1, 1976;
Readopted Eff. December 5, 1977;
Amended Eff. July 1, 1993; October 1, 1985; July 1, 1984;
Readopted Eff. April 1, 2024.*

15A NCAC 18A .1610 TOILET: HANDWASHING: AND BATHING FACILITIES

- (a) All residential care facilities shall provide toilet, handwashing, and bathing facilities that are available for use by residents and employees. These facilities shall be kept clean and in good repair.
- (b) All hand sinks and baths shall be supplied with hot and cold running water through mixing devices. The residential care facility shall provide each resident with soap and individual hand-drying towels. These hand-drying towels will be stored separately after being used.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 130A-4; 130A-235;
Eff. February 1, 1976;
Readopted Eff. December 5, 1977;
Readopted Eff. April 1, 2024.*

15A NCAC 18A .1611 WATER SUPPLY

(a) Water supplies at residential care facilities shall meet the requirements in 15A NCAC 18C or 15A NCAC 18A .1700, as applicable. For facilities licensed by the licensing agency before this Rule's effective date, a well that does not meet the setback to building foundation requirements found in 15A NCAC 18A .1720 shall be approved if water sampling in accordance with Paragraph (b) of this Rule indicates the water is safe for human consumption.

(b) In residential care facilities that use a non-community water supply, a sample of water shall be collected by the Department once a year and submitted to the North Carolina State Laboratory of Public Health or other laboratory certified by the North Carolina State Laboratory of Public Health under 10A NCAC 41C .0102 to perform bacteriological examinations.

(c) A residential care facility's water supply plumbing shall not include cross-connections as set out in 15A NCAC 18C .0102(c)(8).

(d) Residential care facilities shall provide water heating facilities. Hot and cold running water under pressure shall be provided to carry out all operations. Hot water shall be provided at temperatures between 105 degrees Fahrenheit and 116 degrees Fahrenheit at handwashing and bathing facilities.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 95-225; 130A-4; 130A-5(3); 130A-230; 130A-235; 130A-236; 130A-248; 130A-257;
Eff. February 1, 1976;
Readopted Eff. December 5, 1977;
Amended Eff. September 1, 1990; July 1, 1984;
Temporary Amendment Eff. May 5, 1998;
Temporary Amendment Expired January 26, 1999;
Temporary Amendment Eff. January 1, 1999;
Amended Eff. August 1, 2000;
Readopted Eff. April 1, 2024.*

15A NCAC 18A .1612 DRINKING WATER FACILITIES: ICE HANDLING

*History Note: Authority G.S. 130A-235;
Eff. February 1, 1976;
Readopted Eff. December 5, 1977;
Amended Eff. September 1, 1990;
Repealed Eff. April 1, 2024.*

15A NCAC 18A .1613 LIQUID WASTES

All sewage originating from the residential care facility shall be disposed by using a publicly operated sewage treatment plant or in a sewage disposal system that meets the requirements of Section .1900 of this Subchapter.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 130A-4; 130A-235;
Eff. February 1, 1976;
Amended Eff. July 1, 1977;
Readopted Eff. December 5, 1977;
Amended Eff. July 1, 1984;
Readopted Eff. April 1, 2024.*

15A NCAC 18A .1614 SOLID WASTES

- (a) All solid wastes shall be kept in leak-proof, non-absorbent containers. Waste containers shall be kept clean and in good repair.
- (b) Outside waste containers shall be kept covered with tight-fitting lids when not in use.
- (c) All solid wastes shall be removed from the premises at a frequency that prevents pest harborages.

History Note: Authority G.S. 130A-4; 130A-235;
Eff. February 1, 1976;
Readopted Eff. December 5, 1977;
Amended Eff. September 1, 1990;
Readopted Eff. April 1, 2024.

15A NCAC 18A .1615 PEST CONTROL AND OUTDOOR PREMISES

- (a) Pests shall not be present in a residential care facility. Openings to the outside of a residential care facility building or buildings shall be equipped with doors that are flush with the door frame when closed, closed windows, window screening on windows that can be opened, or controlled air currents to prevent pests from entering the building or buildings. The external premises of a residential care facility shall be kept clean, and free of litter and pest harborage. Outdoor furniture and playgrounds shall be kept in good repair.
- (b) Only those pesticides that are registered in accordance with 40 C.F.R. 152 and G.S. 143-442 shall be used at a residential care facility.

History Note: Authority G.S. 130A-4; 130A-235;
Eff. February 1, 1976;
Readopted Eff. December 5, 1977;
Amended Eff. July 1, 1984;
Readopted Eff. April 1, 2024.

15A NCAC 18A .1616 CHEMICAL AND MEDICATION STORAGE

Toxic substances, which include corrosive agents, pesticides, bleaches, detergents, cleansers, polishes, and any substance which may be hazardous to a person if ingested, inhaled, or not handled in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, and all medications, shall be stored and used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

History Note: Authority G.S. 130A-4; 130A-235;
Eff. February 1, 1976;
Readopted Eff. December 5, 1977;
Amended Eff. September 1, 1990;
Readopted Eff. April 1, 2024.

15A NCAC 18A .1617 BEDS: LINEN: LAUNDRY: FURNITURE

- (a) Furnishings, including furniture, curtains, draperies, and blinds, shall be kept clean and in good repair. Mattresses shall be kept clean, dry, and in good repair.
- (b) Clean bed linen in good repair shall be provided for each resident and shall be changed when no longer clean.
- (c) Clean linen shall be stored and handled in a manner to protect from contamination and separate from linen that is not clean.
- (d) Laundry areas and equipment shall be kept clean and in good repair.

History Note: Authority G.S. 130A-4; 130A-235;
Eff. February 1, 1976;
Readopted Eff. December 5, 1977;
Amended Eff. September 1, 1990;
Readopted Eff. April 1, 2024.

15A NCAC 18A .1618 FOOD SERVICE UTENSILS AND EQUIPMENT

- (a) All food service equipment and utensils shall be kept clean and in good repair.
- (b) All food contact surfaces of utensils and equipment shall be cleaned after each use.
- (c) Utensils and equipment shall be handled and stored in a manner as to protect from contamination.
- (d) Residential care facilities shall provide a kitchen sink for cleaning food service equipment and utensils.
- (e) Food storage areas shall be kept clean and free of pests.

History Note: Authority G.S. 130A-4; 130A-235;
Eff. February 1, 1976;
Readopted Eff. December 5, 1977;
Amended Eff. September 1, 1990;
Readopted Eff. April 1, 2024.

15A NCAC 18A .1619 FOOD

All food provided by a residential care facility for consumption by residents shall comply with Parts 3-1 and 3-2 of the Food Code incorporated by reference at 15A NCAC 18A .2650 as amended by 15A NCAC 18A .2653.

History Note: Authority G.S. 130A-4; 130A-235;
Eff. February 1, 1976;
Readopted Eff. December 5, 1977;
Amended Eff. September 1, 1990;
Readopted Eff. April 1, 2024.

15A NCAC 18A .1620 FOOD PROTECTION

- (a) All TCS food shall be maintained at temperatures required by Part 3-501.16 of the Food Code, incorporated by reference at 15A NCAC 18A .2650 as amended by 15A NCAC 18A .2653, during storage, preparation, transportation, display, and service of the TCS food. Time as a public health control as set forth in Part 3-501.19 of the Food Code incorporated by reference at 15A NCAC 18A .2650 as amended by 15A NCAC 18A .2653, may be used, except that written procedures shall not be required.
- (b) Live animals shall not be allowed in any room or area in which food is prepared or stored. Live animals shall be permitted in a residential care facility's dining areas if the live animal does not come into physical contact with residential care facility employees engaged in the preparation or handling of food, serving dishes, utensils, tableware, linens, unwrapped single service and single use articles, or food contact surfaces.
- (c) Equipment shall be provided and maintained to keep all food at required temperatures during storage and transport. Cold holding equipment shall be provided with an indicating thermometer that is accurate to ± 3 degrees Fahrenheit or ± 1.5 degrees Celsius.
- (d) All food shall be stored as required by Parts 3-302.11, 3-302.12, 3-305.11, and 3-305.12 of the Food Code, incorporated by reference at 15A NCAC 18A .2650 as amended by 15A NCAC 18A .2653.

History Note: Authority G.S. 130A-4; 130A-235;
Eff. February 1, 1976;
Readopted Eff. December 5, 1977;
Amended Eff. October 1, 1993; September 1, 1990;
Readopted Eff. April 1, 2024.

15A NCAC 18A .1621 EMPLOYEES

(a) Residential care facility employees shall wash their hands as required by Paragraph (b) of this Rule using the handwashing method required for food employees in Part 2-301.12 of the Food Code incorporated by reference at 15A NCAC 18A .2650 as amended by 15A NCAC 18A .2652.

(b) Residential care facility employees shall wash their hands immediately:

- (1) before beginning work;
- (2) before preparing food;
- (3) after each visit to the toilet;
- (4) before and after resident contact;
- (5) after coughing, sneezing, or using a handkerchief or disposable tissue; and
- (6) after using tobacco, eating, or drinking.

(c) Residential care facility employees shall comply with the requirements for exclusion from work and restriction due to communicable disease or illness required for food employees as set forth in Parts 2-201.12 and 2-201.13 of the Food Code incorporated by reference at 15A NCAC 18A .2650 as amended by 15A NCAC 18A .2652.

(d) The residential care facility shall have gloves, personal protective equipment, disinfectant, individual disposable towels, and a coagulating agent on-site for employees to use and a written procedure for employees to follow when responding to vomitus or fecal matter on facility surfaces. The procedure shall specify the actions that employees shall take to minimize the exposure of employees, residents, guests, food, and additional surfaces to vomitus or fecal matter.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 130A-4; 130A-235;
Eff. February 1, 1976;
Readopted Eff. December 5, 1977;
Amended Eff. September 1, 1990;
Readopted Eff. April 1, 2024.*