

Frequently Asked Questions about...

Infection Prevention Regulatory Requirements for Assisted Living Facilities

Assisted living facilities (ALFs) are licensed by the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) Division of Licensing Programs (DOLP). Infection prevention-related requirements are introduced below but are *not inclusive* of all related regulations. Please refer to DOLP and the Standards for Licensed Assisted Living Facilities for the actual regulations.

Q. Does an ALF need an infection control program even though it is not considered a healthcare facility?

A. Yes. State regulations (22 VAC 40-72-90) mandate the ALF shall establish, document, make available to all staff, and maintain an infection control program that is designed to provide a safe, sanitary, and comfortable environment and to prevent the development and transmission of disease and infection. To summarize the regulation, the infection control program must address:

- Surveillance, prevention, and control of infections
- Establishing procedures to isolate the infecting organism
- Providing easy access to hand washing equipment for all staff, volunteers, and residents
- Prohibiting staff and volunteers with communicable diseases or infections from having direct contact with residents or their food, if direct contact may transmit disease
- Training about risk-reduction behaviors and monitoring performance of infection control practices by staff and volunteers including hand washing and appropriate implementation of standard precautions
- Handling, storing, processing and transporting linens, supplies, equipment, and medical waste in a manner that prevents the spread of infection and is in accordance with regulations
- Maintaining an effective pest control program

Also, the facility administrator must report any outbreak of disease to the local health department.

Q. Are there additional infection prevention-related standards required for ALFs?

A. Yes. Other related standards address staff, volunteers, and the admission of residents. For specific verbiage, consult 22 VAC 40-72-180 (Staff orientation), 22 VAC 40-72-280 (Volunteers), 22 VAC 40-72-290 (Staff records and health requirements) and 22 VAC 40-72-340 (Admission and retention of residents).

- Staff orientation must address hand washing techniques, standard precautions, infection risk-reduction behavior, and procedures for reporting and documenting incidents. Orientation must occur within the first seven days of employment, and unless under the sight supervision of a trained direct care staff person or administrator, prior to assuming job responsibilities.
- Prior to beginning volunteer service, all volunteers must attend an orientation including information on infection control, reporting requirements, and emergency procedures.
- Staff health information, which includes required initial and subsequent tuberculosis (TB) examinations and reports, shall be maintained at the facility.
- Any individual suspected to have infectious TB shall be reported to the local health department (LHD) and not allowed to return until a physician has deemed the person is free of infectious TB.
- ALFs cannot admit individuals with airborne infectious disease that requires isolation, ventilator dependency, specified dermal ulcers, intravenous therapy/injections, or other prohibited conditions.
- No resident shall be admitted or retained if the facility cannot provide or secure appropriate care due to the individual needing a higher level of care or more resources than can be provided.
 - To determine if the individual can be supported by the facility's services, the resident must be assessed prior to admission.