

481—51.26(135B) Minimum standards for construction.

51.26(1) *Minimum standards.* The following construction standards are applicable to hospitals and off-site premises licensed under this chapter:

a. Construction shall be in accordance with the standards set forth in the Guidelines for Design and Construction of Hospitals, 2018 edition, published by the Facility Guidelines Institute.

b. Existing hospitals and off-site premises built in compliance with prior editions of the hospital construction guidelines will be deemed in compliance with subsequent regulations, with the exception of any new structural renovations, additions, functional alterations, or changes in utilization to existing facilities, which shall meet the standards specified in this subrule.

c. The design and construction of a hospital or off-site premises shall be in conformance with 661—Chapter 205.

d. In jurisdictions without a local building code enforcement program, the construction shall be in conformance with the state building code, as authorized by Iowa Code section 103A.7, in effect at the time of plan submittal for review and approval. In jurisdictions with a local building code enforcement program, local building code enforcement must include both the adoption and enforcement of a local building code through plan reviews and inspections.

e. If an applicable requirement of 661—Chapter 205 is inconsistent with an applicable requirement of the state building code, the hospital or off-site premises is deemed to be in compliance with the state building code requirement if the requirement of 661—Chapter 205 is met.

51.26(2) *Submission of construction documents.* Submissions shall comply with rule 661—300.4(103A). The responsible design professional shall certify that the building plans meet the requirements specified in subrule 51.26(1), unless a waiver has been granted pursuant to subrule 51.26(3).

51.26(3) *Waivers.* Requests for waiver may be submitted to the department in accordance with 481—Chapter 6. Any waiver granted is limited to the specific project under consideration and does not establish a precedent for similar acceptance in other cases. The request must demonstrate how patient safety and the quality of care offered will not be compromised by the waiver. In determining whether a waiver request will be granted, the director will consider the following:

a. Whether the design and planning for the specific property offers improved or compensating features to provide equivalent desirability and utility;

b. Whether alternate or special construction methods, techniques, and mechanical equipment offer equivalent durability, utility, health, and safety;

c. Whether the health, safety or welfare of any patient is endangered;

d. Occupancy and function of the building; and

e. The type of licensing.

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