

Planning & Development Services Advisory

Alternative Family Care Home (AFCH)

Question

What is an *Alternative Family Care Home* (AFCH)?

Answer

An *Alternative Family Care Home* (AFCH) means a dwelling unit used as a single housekeeping unit where care is provided to the residents that provides sleeping accommodations for not more than ten total occupants, and the occupancy of the building is either *residential occupancy* or *care occupancy* and there is not more than one other dwelling unit.

COMPLIANCE WITH *THE BUILDING CODE REGULATIONS*, THE *NATIONAL BUILDING CODE OF CANADA 2015* (NBC) AND THE BUILDING BYLAW IS ADDRESSED IN THIS ADVISORY. WORDS IN ITALICS, OTHER THAN ACT TITLES, ARE DEFINED IN THE NBC.

Note: This definition is provided in *The Building Code Regulations*, Amendments to the *National Building Code of Canada 2015*. Additional information is available in the *Alternative Family Care Homes Building and Fire Safety Guide* prepared by the Building Standards and Licensing Branch of the Government of Saskatchewan.

Question

What are the requirements for an AFCH?

Answer

There are many requirements to be met for an AFCH. These include *National Building Code* (NBC) requirements, zoning requirements and site servicing requirements. These are explained in greater detail below.

National Building Code Requirements

The NBC is an occupancy-based code, meaning that there are specific rules for each use. The Government of Saskatchewan has adopted the NBC and has made significant amendments concerning AFCHs use in Saskatchewan. Requirements are based upon total occupants, occupants-in-care (OIC), and the ability for those in care to be *capable of self-preservation*. Applicants must obtain a building permit from the Building Standards & Inspections Branch and are responsible to ensure they meet all Code requirements. The Building Standards & Inspections Branch will perform inspections of the building, when scheduled by the owner. The following table provides a quick reference for the categories of facilities, occupancy classifications, parts of code that apply, and a list of the minimum typical requirements. Additional requirements may apply, depending on the scope of the work.

Type of Care Home	Occupancy Classification	NBC Part	<u>Minimum</u> Typical Building Code Requirements [§]
AFCH (1-5 OIC)	Group C (residential)	Division B, Part 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interconnected smoke alarms • Carbon monoxide alarms • Emergency lighting • Sprinkler system not required if the three requirements above are met (if sprinklers are installed, they must meet NFPA standards[‡]) • Portable fire extinguishers • Code requirements for a Part 9 dwelling unit
AFCH (6-10 OIC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All OIC capable of self-preservation; and • Not licensed as a Personal Care Home (PCH) through the Ministry of Health 	Group C (residential)	Division B, Part 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interconnected smoke alarms • Carbon monoxide alarms • Emergency lighting • Sprinkler system not required if the three requirements above are met (if sprinklers are installed, they must meet NFPA standards[‡]) • Portable fire extinguishers • Code requirements for a Part 3 dwelling unit (requires a professional designer)
AFCH (6-10 OIC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One or more OIC not capable of self-preservation; or • Licensed as a Personal Care Home (PCH) through the Ministry of Health 	Group C (residential)	Division B, Part 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interconnected smoke alarms • Carbon monoxide alarms • Emergency lighting • Sprinkler system meeting NFPA standards (NFPA 13D or NFPA 13R) [‡] • Fire alarm system (if required) [‡] • Portable fire extinguishers • Code requirements for a Part 3 dwelling unit (requires a professional designer)
Care Facility (>10 total occupants)	Group B (care, treatment and detention occupancies)	Division B, Part 3	Part 3 code requirements for Group B occupancy (professional designer required)

[§] NBC and *The Building Code Regulations, Amendments to the National Building Code of Canada 2015*. The items listed are minimum typical requirements of Code. Applicants are responsible to ensure they meet all requirements. Additional requirements may be mandated by the home licensing authority.

[‡] *The Building Code Regulations, Amendments to the National Building Code of Canada 2015* provides Saskatchewan amendments to the NBC regarding sprinkler system in Sentence 3.2.5.12.(2) and Sentence 3.2.5.12.(3). The City of Regina recommends that the requirements of Clause 3.2.5.12.(3)(b) be followed as best practice where an NFPA 13D sprinkler system is installed in an AFCH. This recommendation is due to care being provided in AFCHs, and the importance of a 30-minute water supply demand to the life-safety of the building's occupants, some of whom may not be capable of self-preservation.

[‡] A fire alarm system is not required for NFPA 13D sprinkler systems, but is required for NFPA 13R sprinkler systems. Refer to the NFPA standards for more information.

Zoning Requirements

AFCHs are subject to the *Regina Zoning Bylaw No. 2019 (Zoning Bylaw)*. The regulations are located in the zone of the subject property. It is important to note that the bylaw does not use the term “Alternative Family Care Home”. The *Zoning Bylaw* recognizes two types of Group Care Facilities:

- Dwelling, Group Care
- Dwelling, Assisted Living

The definitions for these terms are provided in Chapter 2 of the *Zoning Bylaw*

Zoning requirements vary, depending on the type of facility being proposed. In general, items considered during the zoning review include:

- Land use
- On-site parking requirements of the zone.

The City Planning Branch will review the application and site plan to determine conformance to the *Regina Zoning Bylaw No.2019* and issue a development permit when requirements are met. **Designated heritage properties** must also submit a Heritage Alteration Permit application.

Site Servicing Requirements

Developing an AFCH may require upgrades to site services to conform to the City of Regina’s current technical standards. Upgrades may include, but are not limited to:

- Larger water service may be required, especially in cases where sprinklers are to be installed
- Sprinklered facilities also require a fire hydrant within 45 meters of the property
- Replacing any water connections made of lead or another material that do not meet current standards
- Disconnecting and capping redundant connections at the water main
- No changes are required to drainage provided the property meets the same discharge rate as before (depending on what the change may be, a storm water plan may be required)

The applicant can send an email to locates@regina.ca for more information regarding site services of the property. The applicant will be responsible to ensure required upgrades are performed, and the Servicing & Infrastructure Approval Branch will inspect the upgraded services.

What changes will apply to taxes?

A change in use will most likely result in a change in either the property’s assessed value and/or the property taxes. Please contact 306-777-7000 for more information.

Conclusion

Every project is unique - there may be other requirements based on the project and existing conditions. It is important to consult with a designer prior to purchasing and planning your project to ensure the house you are considering is a suitable choice to meet your needs.

For more information on professional design, competent designers, and major occupancy classifications, see *link to "Professional and Competent Designer."*

For more information on Building Permits, Building Safety or Zoning Information:

Phone: 306-777-7551

Regina.ca

THIS ADVISORY HAS NO LEGAL STATUS AND CANNOT BE USED AS AN OFFICIAL INTERPRETATION OF THE VARIOUS CODES AND REGULATIONS CURRENTLY IN EFFECT. USERS ARE ADVISED TO CONTACT THE BUILDING STANDARDS & INSPECTIONS BRANCH FOR ASSISTANCE, AS THE CITY OF REGINA ACCEPTS NO RESPONSIBILITY TO PERSONS RELYING SOLELY ON THIS INFORMATION.