

Branch Opinion

Clause 3.7.2.1.(2)(b)

Issue: Openable portion of windows in Long-Term Care Facilities (Nursing Homes).

The issue regarding the openable portion of a window in long term care facilities has been brought to our attention.

We have received information from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care that their current Facility Design Guidelines do not prescribe the minimum percentage of openable window area in sleeping rooms. In addition, it is the practice of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, in approving facility drawings, to limit openable portion of a window to 100 mm to 150 mm (4 to 6 inches). This size restriction was developed in response to a number of incidents where residents have fallen through open windows. (See attached)

Clause 3.7.2.1.(2)(b) of the Ontario Building Code reads:

Nursing homes shall have in a residents' sleeping room, one or more windows that

- (i) have a total unobstructed glass area, exclusive of skylights, of not less than 10% of the area of the room,
- (ii) open to the outdoors and have a total unobstructed glass area, exclusive of skylights, of not less than 5% of the area of the room, and
- (iii) are installed with the bottom edge of the glass of every window not more than 600 mm (23 5/8 in) above the floor.

The Ontario Building Code requires that residents' sleeping rooms in a long term care facilities (nursing home) be provided with a window or windows with a total unobstructed glass area of at least 10% of the area of the room. In addition, the code requires that at least 5% of that area to open to the outdoors.

It is the opinion of the Housing Development and Buildings Branch that the code requires that an unobstructed glass area of at least 5% of the area of the room must face the outdoors, but does not specify the percentage of the window area to be openable. Therefore, limiting the openable portion of a window to 100 mm to 150 mm would be in compliance with the Code.

This response is provided by the staff of the Housing Development and Buildings Branch of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing under the Building Code Act, the local municipality is the authority having jurisdiction for enforcing the Ontario Building Code Act and its Regulations, and you are advised to contact their building official for a definitive reply.



Ali Arlani,
August 2, 2001

**Ministry of Health
and Long-Term Care**

Long-Term Care
Redevelopment Project
415 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, ON M5B 2E7

Telephone: 416-326-6485
Toll Free: 1-877-767-8889
Fax: 416-326-5533

**Ministère de la Santé
et des Soins de longue durée**

Projet de réaménagement des soins
de longue durée
415, rue Yonge, 10^e étage
Toronto, ON M5B 2E7

Téléphone: 416-326-6485
Sans frais: 1-877-767-8889
Télécopieur: 416-326-5533



July 10, 2001

Mr. Ali Arlani
Manager
Code Development and Training Section
Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
777 Bay Street 2nd Floor
Toronto, On, M5G 2E5

Re: Openable Window Space in Long Term Care Facilities

Dear Mr. Arlani:

At our meeting on June 28, 2001 I agreed to provide some clarification of the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care policy with respect to openable window space in long term care facilities.

Prior to the 1998 Long Term Care Facility Design Manual, nursing home legislation required that bedroom windows in facilities be 10% of the floor space of a room and that 5% of this total window space be openable. These prescriptive requirements were eliminated from the new LTC Facility Design Manual, which simply requires that bedrooms have at least one window with a direct view to the outdoors or naturally lit space.

Under both the old and the new facility design guidelines, the practice of the Ministry in approving facility drawings has been to request openable space limits of 4 to 6 inches. This size restriction was developed in response to a number of incidents where facility residents have fallen through open windows. Limiting openable window space to 4 to 6 inches is now part of our recent pre-occupancy review checklist for facilities that are preparing to open.

I trust that this is helpful. If you need additional information or clarification, please contact me directly at 416-326-6501.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Hodge".

Randy Hodge
Director of Facilitation

c: Lee Kirby Leblanc