

## Index - Chapter 3.4 Specific Requirements for Freestanding Birth Centers

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### 3.4-1 General

A freestanding birth center is exclusively dedicated to serving the childbirth-related needs of women and their newborns. A birth center is any health facility, place, or institution that is not a hospital or in a hospital where birth is planned to occur away from the mother's residence following a normal, uncomplicated pregnancy.

#### 3.4-1.1 Application

The freestanding birth center shall meet the standards described herein and the standards referenced in Part 1 of these Guidelines as applicable to all health care facilities.

#### \*3.4-1.2 Functional Program

See [sections 1.2-2](#) (Functional Program) and [3.1-1.2](#) (Functional Program) for requirements.

**A3.4-1.2 Functional program.** For additional information on generally accepted guidelines and standards for birth centers, contact the primary accrediting entity, the Commission for the Accreditation of Birth Centers ([www.birthcenters.org](http://www.birthcenters.org)), and refer to the following publications:

American Association of Birth Centers, *Standards for Birth Centers*

American Academy of Pediatrics and American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, *Guidelines for Perinatal Care*

#### 3.4-1.2.1 Size and Layout

Department sizes and clear floor areas depend on program requirements and organization of services within the facility. As required by community needs, combination or sharing of some functions shall be permitted, provided the layout does not compromise safety standards and medical nursing practices.

#### 3.4-1.2.2 Transfer and Service Affiliations

Transfer and service affiliations with hospitals with obstetrical services shall be part of planning for a freestanding birth center.

### **3.4-1.3 Site**

#### **3.4-1.3.1 Location**

**3.4-1.3.1.1** Mode of transport and travel times to affiliated hospitals shall be considered in facility location and design.

(1) Timeliness of maternal-fetal transport for commencement of cesarean delivery shall be the prime consideration.

(2) Other considerations shall include neonatal and maternal transport to surgical or specialty care.

**3.4-1.3.1.2** The facility shall not be located on a site in a floodplain, on a seismic fault line, or with other natural impediment to maintaining a stable operational environment.

**3.4-1.3.1.3** The location of a freestanding birth center shall be accessible from parking and, if available, from public transportation.

#### **3.4-1.3.2 Parking**

**\*3.4-1.3.2.1** In the absence of a formal parking study, one space shall be provided for each birthing room plus one space for each employee normally present on any single weekday shift.

**A3.4-1.3.2.1** Additional parking may be required to accommodate other services.

**3.4-1.3.2.3** Separate and additional space shall be provided for emergency transfer vehicles.

## **3.4-2 Birth Center Facilities**

### **3.4-2.1 General**

#### **3.4-2.1.1 Size**

The number of birthing rooms shall be as indicated in the functional program.

#### **3.4-2.1.2 Location**

**3.4-2.1.2.1** Birthing rooms shall be located to address privacy during occupancy for labor, birth, and postpartum care.

**3.4-2.1.2.2** Birthing rooms shall be located out of the path of unrelated traffic and under direct supervision of the facility staff.

### **3.4-2.2 Birthing Room**

### **3.4-2.2.1 Capacity**

The maximum number of beds per room shall be one.

### **3.4-2.2.2 Space Requirements**

**3.4-2.2.2.1 Area.** A birthing room shall have a minimum clear floor area of 200 square feet (18.58 square meters), including the newborn care area.

**3.4-2.2.2.2 Clearance.** A birthing room shall have a minimum clear dimension of 12 feet (3.66 square meters).

### **3.4-2.2.3 Windows**

Each birthing room shall have an outside window.

### **3.4-2.2.4 Privacy**

Windows or doors within a normal sightline that would permit observation into the room shall be arranged or draped as necessary for mother and newborn privacy.

### **3.4-2.2.5 Hand-Washing Station**

Each birthing room shall be equipped with a hand-washing station with hands-free operation.

### **3.4-2.2.6 Bathrooms**

Each birthing room shall have direct access to a private bathroom with the following:

**3.4-2.2.6.1** Hand-washing station

**3.4-2.2.6.2** Toilet

**3.4-2.2.6.3** Shower or tub

### **3.4-2.3 Newborn Care Area**

If required in the functional program, a separate newborn care area shall be provided in addition to the birthing room.

### **3.4-2.4 Reserved**

### **3.4-2.5 Support Areas—General**

**3.4-2.5.1** The size and location of each support area shall depend on the numbers and types of modalities served.

**3.4-2.5.2** When a support area is required for the services offered in the birth center, identifiable spaces shall be provided for each.

### **3.4-2.6 Support Areas for the Birth Center**

#### **3.4-2.6.1 Reception and Administration**

This area shall be located to control and monitor access to the birth center.

#### **3.4-2.6.2 Staff Work Area**

Work area(s) for staff with counters and space for storage shall be provided.

#### **3.4-2.6.3 Office**

Office space shall be provided to support the needs of the birth center.

#### **3.4-2.6.4 Reserved**

#### **3.4-2.6.5 Hand-Washing Stations**

Hand-washing stations shall be located in, next to, or directly accessible to staff work area(s).

#### **3.4-2.6.6 Medication Safety Zone**

See [Section 3.1-3.6.6](#) (Medication Safety Zones) for requirements.

#### **3.4-2.6.7 Nourishment Area**

**3.4-2.6.7.1** If a nourishment area is provided, it shall meet the requirements in [Section 3.1-3.6.7](#) (Nourishment Area or Room).

**3.4-2.6.7.2** The nourishment area shall include space for trays and dishes used for nonscheduled meal service.

**3.4-2.6.7.3** Provisions and space shall be included in the nourishment area for separate temporary storage of unused and soiled dietary trays not picked up during meal time.

#### **3.4-2.6.8 Ice-Making Equipment**

Each center shall have equipment to provide ice for treatments and nourishment.

**3.4-2.6.8.1** Ice-making equipment shall be permitted in the clean workroom or in the nourishment area.

**3.4-2.6.8.2** Ice intended for human consumption shall be provided in the nourishment area and shall be served from self-dispensing ice-makers.

#### **3.4-2.6.9 Clean Workroom**

**3.4-2.6.9.1** Clean workrooms shall be separate from and have no direct connection with soiled workrooms or soiled holding rooms.

**3.4-2.6.9.2** If the clean workroom is used for preparing care items for mothers and newborns, it shall contain the following:

- (1) Work counter
- (2) Hand-washing station
- (3) Storage facilities for clean and sterile supplies and equipment

#### **3.4-2.6.10 Soiled Workroom or Soiled Holding Room**

Such rooms shall be separate from and have no direct connection with clean work rooms or clean supply rooms.

**3.4-2.6.10.1 Soiled workroom.** A soiled workroom shall contain the following:

- (1) Hand-washing station
- (2) Clinical sink or equivalent flushing-rim fixture
- (3) Work counter
- (4) Space for separate covered containers for soiled linen and waste

#### **3.4-2.6.10.2 Soiled holding room**

(1) This room shall contain the following:

- (a) Hand-washing station or hand sanitation station
- (b) Space for separate covered containers

(2) Omission of the clinical sink and work counter shall be permitted in rooms used only for temporary holding of soiled material.

(3) If a flushing-rim clinical sink is not provided, facilities for cleaning bedpans shall be provided in the mothers' toilet rooms.

#### **3.4-2.6.11 Clean Linen Storage Area**

#### **3.4-2.6.12 Environmental Services Room**

**3.4-2.6.12.1** An environmental services room shall be provided for the exclusive use of the birth center.

**3.4-2.6.12.2** The environmental services room shall include the following:

(1) Service sink or floor-mounted mop sink

(2) Space for storage of supplies, housekeeping equipment, and housekeeping carts

#### **3.4-2.6.13 Examination Room**

If an examination room is provided, it shall meet the requirements of [Section 3.1-3.2.2](#) (General Purpose Examination/Observation Room).

#### **3.4-2.7 Support Areas for Staff**

##### **3.4-2.7.1 Staff Changing Room**

If a changing room for staff is provided, it shall include a shower.

##### **3.4-2.7.2 Staff Lounge**

A lounge for staff shall be provided.

##### **3.4-2.7.3 Staff Toilet Room**

A toilet room for the use of staff shall be provided.

##### **3.4-2.7.4 Staff Storage Locations**

Securable lockers, closets, and/or cabinet compartments shall be provided for the personal articles of staff.

*Section 3.4-3 currently has no content. "Reserved" is used to help standardize numbering of the text and is not intended as a placeholder for a specific requirement.*

#### **3.4-3 Reserved**

#### **3.4-4 Patient Support Facilities**

##### **3.4-4.1 Reserved**

##### **3.4-4.2 Reserved**

##### **3.4-4.3 Food and Nutrition Services**

### **3.4-4.3.1 Standards**

Any food service facilities and equipment provided shall conform to requirements in these *Guidelines* and to the standards of the National Sanitation Foundation and other applicable codes.

### **3.4-4.3.2 On-Site Food Service**

If on-site food service is provided, the following requirements shall apply as it suitable to the food service provided.

#### **2.2-4.3.4.1 Facilities for commissary or contract services from other areas**

(1) Provision shall be made to protect food delivered to ensure freshness, retain hot and cold temperatures, and avoid contamination. If delivery is from outside sources, protection against weather shall be provided.

(2) Provision shall be made for thorough cleaning and sanitizing of equipment to avoid mixing soiled and clean equipment.

**2.2-4.3.4.2 Vending services.** If vending devices are used for unscheduled meals, a separate room shall be provided that can be accessed without having to enter the main dining area.

(1) The vending room shall contain coin-operated machines, bill changers, a hand-washing station, and a sitting area.

(2) Facilities for servicing and sanitizing the machines shall be provided as part of the facility's food service program.

## **3.4-5 General Support Facilities**

### **3.4-5.1 – 5.2 Reserved**

### **3.4-5.3 Materials Management**

#### **3.4-5.3.1 Receiving Area**

Receiving areas shall be provided as indicated in the functional program.

#### **3.4-5.3.2 General Stores**

General storage shall be provided on-site.

#### **3.4-5.3.3 Service Entrance**

When required in the functional program, a service entrance, protected from inclement weather, shall be provided for loading and unloading of supplies.

### **3.4-5.4 Waste Management**

#### **3.4-5.4.1 Waste Collection and Storage**

Space and facilities shall be provided for the sanitary storage and collection of waste, including biohazardous waste.

#### **3.4-5.4.2 Waste Treatment and Disposal**

For waste treatment and disposal requirements, see [Section 3.1-5.4.2](#) (Waste Treatment and Disposal Facilities).

#### **3.4-5.5 Reserved**

#### **3.4-5.6 Engineering and Maintenance Services**

Space for mechanical and electrical equipment and for maintenance of the equipment shall be provided.

*Section 3.4-6 currently has no content. "Reserved" is used to help standardize numbering of the text and is not intended as a placeholder for a specific requirement.*

### **3.4-6 Reserved**

## **3.4-7 Design and Construction Requirements**

### **3.4-7.1 Building Codes**

The birth center shall be permitted to fall under the business occupancy provisions of applicable life safety and building codes.

### **3.4-7.2 Architectural Details and Surfaces**

#### **3.4-7.2.1 Architectural Details**

**3.4-7.2.1.1 Corridors.** In the absence of local codes or ordinances, the required minimum corridor width shall be 5 feet (1.52 meters).

#### **3.4-7.2.2 Surfaces**

**3.4-7.2.2.1 Birthing rooms.** Finishes shall be selected to facilitate cleaning and to resist strong detergents.

**3.4-7.2.2.2 Dietary facilities.** Finishes in the dietary facility shall be selected to ensure cleanability and the maintenance of sanitary conditions.

## **3.4-8 Building Systems**

HVAC, electrical, plumbing, and related building systems shall meet state and local building codes.

### **3.4-8.1 Reserved**

### **3.4-8.2 Heating, Ventilation, and Air-Conditioning (HVAC) Systems**

#### **3.4-8.2.1 Ventilation in the Environmental Services Room**

The environmental services (housekeeping) room shall be exhausted at a rate of no fewer than 10 air changes per hour.

### **3.4-8.3 Electrical Systems**

#### **3.4-8.3.1 Lighting**

The birthing room shall provide lighting capable of providing at least 70 foot-candles in the delivery and newborn care area(s).

### **3.4-8.4 Plumbing Systems**

#### **3.4-8.4.1 Medical Gas Outlets**

**3.4-8.4.1.1** Birthing rooms shall have available oxygen and vacuum per the requirements of [Table 3.1-1](#) (Station Outlets for Oxygen, Vacuum, and Medical Air in Outpatient Facilities). Use of portable equipment shall be permitted.

**3.4-8.4.1.2** Medical gas storage shall be provided in accordance with NFPA 99: *Health Care Facilities Code*.

### **3.4-8.5 Reserved**

### **3.4-8.6 Security Systems**

Consideration shall be given in the design of freestanding birth centers for active and passive security systems. Locking arrangements, security alarms, and monitoring devices shall be placed carefully and shall not interfere with the life safety features necessary to operate and maintain a healthy and functional environment.

### **3.4-8.7 Special Systems**

### **3.4-8.7.1 Elevators**

Where elevators are provided, elevator cars shall have minimum inside dimensions of 5 feet 8 inches (1.73 meters) wide by 7 feet 6 inches (2.29 meters) deep.