

Chapter 3.1 - Common Elements for Outpatient Facilities

3.1-1 General

The outpatient facilities described in Part 3 of the Guidelines are used primarily by patients who are able to travel or be transported to the facility for treatment, including those confined to wheelchairs. These facilities may be an outpatient unit in a hospital, a freestanding facility, or an outpatient facility in a multiple-use building containing an ambulatory health care facility as defined in the NFPA 101: *Life Safety Code*® occupancy chapters.

3.1-1.1 Application

3.1-1.1.1 This chapter contains elements that are common to most types of outpatient facilities. The elements shall be required in a facility when referenced in a specific outpatient facility chapter in Part 3. Consideration shall be given to the special needs of the anticipated patient population as described in the functional program.

3.1-1.1.2 Additional specific requirements are located in the facility chapters of Part 3 (facility chapters are listed below). Consult the facility chapters to determine if elements in this chapter are required.

- Primary care facilities (Chapter 3.2)
- Freestanding outpatient diagnostic and treatment facilities (Chapter 3.3)
- Freestanding birth centers (Chapter 3.4)
- Freestanding urgent care facilities (Chapter 3.5)
- Freestanding cancer treatment facilities (Chapter 3.6)
- Outpatient surgical facilities (Chapter 3.7)
- Office-based procedure and operating rooms (Chapter 3.8)
- Endoscopy facilities (Chapter 3.9)
- Renal dialysis centers (Chapter 3.10)
- Outpatient psychiatric centers (Chapter 3.11)
- Outpatient rehabilitation therapy facilities (Chapter 3.12)
- Mobile, transportable, and relocatable units (Chapter 3.13)
- Dental facilities (Chapter 3.14)

3.1-1.1.3 Language from other chapters in the *Guidelines* is included in the criteria given in this Part when reference is made to a specific section. Such references include the section as identified by number and heading and all its subsections, unless otherwise noted.

3.1-1.2 Functional Program

3.1-1.2.1 General

3.1-1.2.1.1 Functional program requirement. Each governing body shall provide a functional program for the facility. See [Section 1.2-2](#) (Functional Program) for requirements.

3.1-1.2.1.2 Specialty facilities. Specialty outpatient facilities not included in Part 3 may have needs that are not addressed in this chapter. Development of such specialty facilities shall rely on a detailed and specific functional program to establish physical environment requirements beyond the general requirements identified in this chapter.

***3.1-1.2.2 Patient Privacy**

Each facility design shall ensure appropriate levels of patient acoustic and visual privacy and dignity throughout the care process.

A3.1-1.2.2 Visual privacy can be achieved using various means, including cubicle curtains, blinds, and electronically controlled vision panels. In private rooms, the entry room door can be used to achieve visual privacy provided the door is solid or non-transparent glass. When doors with vision panels or transparent glass are used, provisions for visual privacy should be made. Every effort should be made to design the room so the foot of the exam table does not face the door, especially in obstetrics/gynecology clinics.

For more information, see [Section 1.1-4.4](#) (National Standards for the Protection of Patient Health Information).

***3.1-1.2.3 Shared/Purchased Services**

If space and/or services are to be shared or purchased, details of such shared or purchased space and/or services shall be indicated in the functional program to ensure design and infection prevention considerations are addressed for services to be provided in the facility.

A3.1-1.2.3 Shared/purchased services. Shared/purchased space and/or services may include space and/or services for storage, laundry, public areas, housekeeping facilities, and waste management.

3.1-1.3 Site

3.1-1.3.1 Location

Refer to Chapter 1.3, Site, for general requirements.

3.1-1.3.2 Parking

Parking provided shall comply with the general requirements in [Section 1.3-3.3](#) (Parking) and the specific requirements in each facility chapter in Part 3.

3.1-1.3.3 Entrance

Building entrances used to reach outpatient services shall be at grade level, clearly marked, and located so patients need not go through other activity areas. (Shared lobbies shall be permitted in multi-occupancy buildings.)

3.1-1.4 Facility Layout

Facility layout shall preclude unrelated traffic in the facility.