

3.6 Freestanding Birthing Centers

The freestanding birthing center is “any health facility, place, or institution that is not a hospital and where births are planned to occur away from the mother’s usual place of residence” (American Public Health Association, 1982).

*1 General Considerations

1.1 Applicability

All standards set forth in Sections 1 through 5 of Chapter 3.1 (General Considerations, Diagnostic and Treatment Locations, Service Areas, Administrative and Public Areas, and Construction Standards) shall be met for new construction of birthing centers, with modifications described in this chapter.

1.2 Site

1.2.1 Parking

Parking spaces for clients and families shall be provided at a rate of no fewer than two for each birth room. In addition, one space shall be provided for each of the maximum number of staff persons on duty at any given time. Adjustments, as described in Section 3.1-1.7.2, shall be permitted where public parking, public transportation, etc., reduce the need for on-site parking.

2 Clinical Facilities

The following elements shall be provided for clinical services as needed to satisfy the functional program:

2.1 Birthing Rooms

2.1.1 Number

A minimum of two birthing rooms shall be provided.

2.1.2 Layout

The plan for each birthing room shall be such that it will permit unimpeded emergency transfer by stretcher.

2.1.3 Space Requirements

Birthing rooms shall be adequate in size to accommodate one patient, her family, and attending staff.

2.1.3.1 Area and dimensions

- (1) New construction. A minimum clear floor area of 160 square feet (48.76 square meters) shall be provided with a minimum dimension of 11 feet (3.35 meters), excluding vestibule, toilet, closet, and fixed casework.
- (2) Renovation. A minimum floor area of 120 square feet (11.15 square meters), excluding vestibule, toilet, and closets, with a minimum dimension of 10 feet (3.05 meters) shall be provided.

2.1.3.2 Clearances. Room arrangement shall permit a minimum clearance of 3 feet (91.44 centimeters) at each side, head, and foot of the bed.

2.1.4 Oxygen, Vacuum, and Medical Air

Birthing rooms shall have available oxygen, vacuum, and medical air per Table 2.1-5, LDRP rooms.

2.1.5 Communication

Each birthing room shall be equipped with a system for communicating to other parts of the center and to an outside telephone line.

2.1.6 Equipment and Supply Storage

2.1.6.1 Each birthing room shall have storage space sufficient to accommodate belongings of occupants, bedding, equipment, and supplies needed for a family-centered childbirth.

2.1.6.2 An area for equipment and supplies for routine and remedial newborn care, separate from the equipment supplies for maternal care, shall be provided in each birthing room.

2.1.6.3 Medicine, syringes, specimen containers, and instrument packs shall be contained in storage areas not accessible to children.

2.2 Support Areas for Birthing Rooms

2.2.1 Scrub Areas

Hand-washing stations with hands-free faucets shall be conveniently accessible to the birthing rooms.

2.2.2 Clean Storage

A separate area for storing clean and sterile supplies shall be provided.

2.2.3 Soiled Holding

2.2.3.1 Provisions shall be made for separate collection, storage, and disposal of soiled materials.

2.2.3.2 Fluid waste may be disposed of in the toilet adjacent to the birth room.

2.2.4 Equipment and Supply Storage

2.2.4.1 Storage for drugs and biologicals. An area for locked storage of drugs and refrigeration of biologicals (separate from the nourishment area refrigerator) shall be provided.

2.2.4.2 Emergency equipment. An area for maternal and newborn emergency equipment and supplies (carts or trays) shall be designated out of the direct line of traffic and conveniently accessible to the birthing rooms.

2.3 Support Areas for Staff

A secure storage space for personal effects, toilet, shower, change, and lounge area sufficient to accommodate staff needs shall be provided.

2.4 Support Areas for Patients

Toilet, hand-washing station, and bath/shower facilities with appropriately placed grab bars shall be adjacent to each birthing room. Bath/shower facilities shall not be shared by more than two birthing rooms.

3 Service Areas

3.1 Sterilizing Facilities

Sterile supplies may be prepackaged disposables or processed off-site. If instruments and supplies are sterilized on-site, an area for accommodation of sterilizing equipment appropriate to the volume of the birth center shall be provided.

3.2 Laundry Facilities

Laundry may be done on- or off-site.

3.2.1 Soiled Holding Area

Soiled laundry shall be held in the soiled holding area until deposited in the washer.

3.2.2 Laundry Equipment

If laundry is done on-site, an area for laundry equipment with counter and storage space shelving shall be provided. Depending on the size and occupancy of the center, use of ordinary household laundry equipment shall be permitted.

4 Administrative and Public Areas

4.1 Public Areas

These shall include the areas listed in this section.

4.1.1 General

4.1.1.1 Provisions for the disabled. See Section 1.1-4.

4.1.1.2 Childproof electrical outlets. These shall be used in public areas of the freestanding birthing center.

4.1.2 Entrance

4.1.2.1 The entrance to the birthing center shall be at ground level, well marked and illuminated.

4.1.2.2 Provisions shall be made for emergency vehicle access.

4.1.3 Reception

A reception area with facility to accommodate outdoor wear shall be provided.

4.1.4 Family Room

A family room with a designated play area for children shall be provided.

4.1.5 Toilet and Hand-Washing Stations

Convenient access to toilet and hand-washing stations shall be provided.

4.1.6 Nourishment Area

A nourishment area shall be provided where families can store and serve light refreshment of their dietary and cultural preferences. The area shall include a sink

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and counter space, range, oven or microwave, refrigerator, cooking utensils, disposable tableware or dishwasher, storage space, and seating area.

4.1.7 Telephone

Convenient access to telephone service shall be provided.

4.1.8 Provisions for Drinking Water

Convenient access to provisions for drinking water shall be provided.

4.2 Administrative Areas

4.2.1 Records

Space for performing administrative functions, charting, and secure record storage shall be provided.