SCOPE

Intermediate Care Facility for the Mentally Retarded (ICF/MR)
Directors
County Mental Health/Mental Retardation Administrators

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Bulletin is to provide information related to the Life Safety Codes for Intermediate Care Facilities for the Mentally Retarded.

BACKGROUND

The Department of Health assumed responsibility as the sole fire authority for Intermediate Care Facilities for the Mentally Retarded effective April 25, 1981. At that time, the 1967 edition of the Life Safety Code was the only edition of the Code that was applicable to existing and new Intermediate Care Facilities for the Mentally Retarded, both large (16 beds or more) and small (15 beds or less). In November, 1982, and in May, 1986, the Department of Health and Human Services changed editions of the Life Safety Code which became applicable to Intermediate Care Facilities for the Mentally Retarded. It should be noted that the 1985 edition of the Life Safety Code also changed the definitions of "large" to include facilities that have more than 16 beds, and of "small" to include facilities that have 16 or fewer beds.

DISCUSSION

1. Life Safety Code

Prior to April 25, 1981, building plans were approved and certificates of occupancy were issued by the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry. Since April 25, 1981, the Pennsylvania Department of Health has been approving building plans and issuing certificates of occupancy. The appropriate Life Safety Code for Intermediate Care Facilities for the Mentally Retarded may be determined as follows:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of Plan Approval or Issuance of Certificate of Occupancy</th>
<th>Appropriate Life Safety Code</th>
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<tr>
<td>Prior to March 18, 1974</td>
<td>1967 Code; Existing Section (Chapter 10)</td>
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<tr>
<td>On or after March 18, 1974 and before November 26, 1982</td>
<td>1967 Code; New Section (Chapter 10)</td>
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<td>On or after November 25, 1982 and before May 19, 1986</td>
<td>1981 Code; Chapters 12 or 13</td>
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<td>On or after May 19, 1986</td>
<td>1985 Code; Chapters 21 (Small Intermediate Care Facility for the Mentally Retarded, i.e., 16 or fewer beds).</td>
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<tr>
<td>On or after May 9, 1988</td>
<td>1985 Code; Chapters 12 and 13 (Large Intermediate Care Facility for the Mentally Retarded, i.e., more than 16 beds).</td>
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Intermediate Care Facility for the Mentally Retarded providers should be aware that health care facilities are governed by Chapters 12 and 13 of both the 1981 and the 1985 Codes and pertain to large Intermediate Care Facilities for the Mentally Retarded. Chapter 21 of the 1985 Code pertains to small Intermediate Care Facilities for the Mentally Retarded, the residents of which must be evaluated by staff of the Division of Safety Inspection who utilize the Evacuation Difficulty Index (EDI). In addition, the Fire Safety Evaluation System may be used to determine fire safety compliance with the 1985 Code. These evaluations (as with the Evacuation Difficulty Index) must be performed by staff of the Division of Safety Inspection. Regardless of which evaluation tool is used, all small Intermediate Care Facilities for the Mentally Retarded must comply with the provisions for residential board and care occupancies (Chapter 21) of the 1981 or 1985 Life Safety Codes. Central Office staff of the Division of Safety Inspection, Department of Health, will help providers to determine, on an individual basis, the appropriate Chapter(s) of the Life Safety Code that should be applied to each Intermediate Care Facility for the Mentally Retarded project.
2. Architectural Plan Review

The Department of Health continues to review building plans, conduct field reviews, and issue certificates of occupancy (except in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and Scranton). As noted above, Life Safety Code reviews are conducted by Central Office staff of the Division of Safety Inspection in the Department of Health.

After a plan review has been completed, a site inspection will be conducted for compliance with the applicable provisions of the relevant Life Safety Code and subsequently, a certificate of occupancy will be issued. This review will become part of the certification packet with related reviews conducted by the Department of Health, Division of Long Term Care.

Reviews are to be conducted on an appointment only basis. Providers may call the Division of Safety Inspection (717-783-1408) to schedule appointments, review issues, and to obtain clarification regarding the review process or the applicable standards.

Intermediate Care Facility for the Mentally Retarded providers must obtain Certificate of Need (CON) approval from the Division of Need Review, Department of Health, and should include this approval document with architectural plans when they are submitted for review by the Division of Safety Inspection.