



Georgia Assisted Living Community Fire Safety Regulations Become Official

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Modified fire safety regulations for Georgia's assisted living communities became official on January 30, 2014. The new fire safety regulations provide minimum fire safety standards for assisted living communities, a relatively new licensure category in Georgia (established in 2011). Notably, the final adoption of the fire safety rules means that personal care homes in Georgia, which had been granted a waiver by the Department of Community Health (DCH) to continue using the phrase "assisted living" in their name and marketing materials, must either remove "assisted living" from their name and marketing materials or apply for assisted living community licensure.

DCH's rules for personal care homes provide that a personal care home, which is not licensed as an assisted living community, must not use the term "assisted living" in its name or marketing materials. While the modified fire safety regulations were pending, DCH granted waivers of this rule to existing personal care homes that were considering applying for assisted living community licensure.

DCH has indicated that personal care homes seeking to continue using "assisted living" in their name and/or marketing materials must submit assisted living community licensing applications, along with an electronic copy of an inspection request to the State Fire Marshal's office, by March 5, 2014. Although additional modifications to homes may be necessary after March 5 in order to meet State Fire Marshal approval, homes may continue to use the phrase "assisted living" as long as an application and copy of an inspection request are received by DCH by the March 5 deadline.

Assisted living communities are defined as personal care homes with a minimum of 25 residents that are licensed to provide certain additional services, which may allow for non-ambulatory residents to remain in the home. The assisted living community concept was developed to expand options for residents of personal care homes who are no longer appropriate for such a setting.

The modified fire safety regulations adopted on January 30, 2014 make it easier for existing personal care homes to convert to assisted living communities.

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