



## SUBJECT

Electrical Life-Support Equipment for Nursing Homes and Limited Care Facilities

**CAN: 3-517.40(B)**

**Effective: 10/10/2012**



## CODE SECTION

Article 517, Section 517.40(B)  
2010 California Electrical Code

Chapter 12, Section 1225  
2010 California Building Code

Chapter 3, Section 316  
2010 California Mechanical Code

### **2010 California Electrical Code Chapter 5 SPECIAL OCCUPANCIES Article 517 Health Care Facilities**

#### **517.18 General Care Areas.**

**(A) Patient Bed Location.** Each patient bed location shall be supplied by at least two branch circuits, one from the emergency system and one from the normal system. ...

**(B) Patient Bed location Receptacles.** Each patient bed location shall be provided with a minimum of four receptacles. ...

#### **517.2 Definitions.**

**Critical Branch.** A subsystem of the emergency system consisting of feeders and branch circuits supplying energy to task illumination, special power circuits, and selected receptacles serving areas and functions related to patient care and that are connected to alternate power sources by one or more transfer switches during interruption of normal power source.

**Electrical Life-Support Equipment.** Electrically powered equipment whose continuous operation is necessary to maintain a patient's life.

#### **517.40 Essential Electrical Systems for Nursing Homes and Limited Care Facilities**

**(B) Inpatient Hospital Care Facilities.** For those nursing homes and limited care facilities that admit patients who need to be sustained by electrical life-support equipment, the essential electrical system from the source to the portion of the facility where such patients are treated shall comply with the requirements of Part III, 517.30 through 517.35.

**2010 California Building Code  
Part 2, Vol. 1, Chapter 12 INTERIOR ENVIRONMENT  
Section 1225 Skilled Nursing and Intermediate-Care Facilities**

**1225.5.1.2.2 Bed Clearance.** A minimum distance of 3 feet (914 mm) shall be provided between beds and 4 feet (1219 mm) between the foot of beds and walls or fixed objects in multi-patient rooms, and 3 feet (914 mm) in single-patient rooms.

**2010 California Mechanical Code  
Chapter 3 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS  
Section 316.0 Essential Mechanical Provisions**

**316.0 Essential Mechanical Provisions [OSHPD 1, 2, 3 (Surgical Clinics only) & 4]**

During periods of power outages essential electrical power shall be provided for the following equipment:

**316.1** (Does not apply to OSHPD 3 surgical clinic.) All heating equipment necessary to maintain a minimum temperature of 60°F (15.6°) in patient areas which are not specified in Table 315.

**316.2** All heating equipment necessary to maintain the minimum temperatures for sensitive areas as specified in Table 315.

**316.3** Equipment necessary for humidification of the areas listed in Table 315.

**316.4** All supply, return, and exhaust fans required to maintain the positive and negative air balances as required in Table 4-A.

**316.5** All control components and control systems necessary for the normal operation of equipment required to have essential electrical power.

**316.6** Alarms for airborne infection isolation rooms and protective environment rooms.

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**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Code Application Notice (CAN) is to clarify the requirements of sub-acute bed locations related to nursing homes and limited care facilities that admit patients needing sustained electrical life-support equipment. This CAN is for skilled nursing facility (SNF) projects converting a general care patient bed(s) to sub-acute bed(s) including in the scope of work replacement of a generator or addition of patient bed receptacle(s). Those projects including replacement of a generator or addition of patient bed receptacle(s) in the scope of work, but not converting a general care patient bed(s) to a sub-acute bed(s) will require a note on the drawings stating, "Facility will not admit patients sustained by life support."

**BACKGROUND**

*Electrical life-support equipment*, as defined in California Electrical Code (CEC) Section 517.2 and NFPA 99, reflects the type of equipment that would require a hospital-grade essential electrical system as defined in CEC, Part III, Sections 517.30 through 517.35. Nursing homes and limited care facilities that want to admit patients who need to be sustained by electrical life-support equipment must have a hospital-grade essential electrical system for these bed locations in order to meet the needs of these patients. The new life-support equipment will require sufficient space around each patient's bed so the patient bed location space requirements must comply with the current code. The staff operational needs must be provided for both clinical and emergency functions. Conversion projects may require the removal of a patient bed from a semi-private bedroom so that there is sufficient room surrounding the bed location utilizing the new electrical life-support equipment in order to meet code requirements.

**INTERPRETATION**

Electrical requirements and architectural space requirements are specific items that must be addressed to provide electrical life-support equipment for a general care patient bed(s) in a nursing home or limited care facility, generally referred to as sub-acute beds.

For projects converting existing SNF patient bed locations to sub-acute patient bed locations, the project's detailed description in the New Project Application (OSH-FD-121) shall clearly indicate that existing SNF patient bed location(s) are being converted to sub-acute patient bed location(s). The project submittal documents will need to clearly describe the work identified in the context of existing conditions and applicable code requirements. The project submittal documents must demonstrate that all the requirements have been met. A conversion to a sub-acute bed is not a change in licensed service. It would be considered an electrical change in function requiring compliance with the Remodel CAN 2-102.6 (Electrical). Projects solely for the purpose of establishing a sub-acute bed will not trigger accessibility requirements. (Refer to California Building Code (CBC) Section 1134B)

The facility's electrical system serving the sub-acute bed(s) will need to meet the requirements as specified in CEC Sections 517.30 through 517.35. The essential electrical system serving the sub-acute bed(s) will need an Emergency System (comprised of a life safety branch and a critical branch) and an Equipment System. All transfer switches serving the sub-acute bed(s) will be required to have by-pass isolation per CEC Section 517.30(B)(7). Generator fuel supply shall be a minimum of six hours per CEC Section 700.12(B)(2) Exception No. 2. The life safety branch and critical branch will transfer within this 10 second period per CEC Section 517.31. The life safety electrical loads will be required to be connected to the life safety branch as specified in CEC Section 517.32. The nurse call system will be required to meet the requirements in CEC Section 517.123 and CBC Table 1224.4.6.5, and it will need to be served from the critical branch as specified in CEC Section 517.33(A)(5).

The facility will be required to meet the essential mechanical provisions of California Mechanical Code (CMC) Section 316. New electrical loads for the equipment associated

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with CMC Section 316 will be required to be connected to an electrical panel served from the Equipment System as specified in CEC Section 517.34(B)(1.1). If existing mechanical loads serving the sub-acute bed(s) are not connected to an existing Equipment System, they will need to be moved to an electrical panel that is served from the Equipment System.

The sub-acute patient bed location(s) with life-support equipment shall meet the wiring, grounding, branch circuits and receptacles requirements of CEC Sections 517.12, 517.13, 517.18 and 517.33(A)(8). Normal and essential panels serving the receptacles in the same sub-acute patient rooms shall have their equipment grounding terminal buses bonded together per CEC Section 517.14. Task lighting will be provided in the sub-acute patient room and will be on the critical branch per CEC Section 517.33(A)(8).

Equipment supporting a sub-acute bed is required to have special seismic certification in accordance with ASCE 7 Section 13.2.2 for the following systems, equipment, and components, unless specified otherwise by the enforcement agency per CBC Section 1708A:

- Emergency and standby power systems including generators, turbines, fuel tanks and automatic transfer switches
- Elevator equipment (excluding elevator cabs)
- Smoke control fans
- Exhaust fans
- Switchgear
- Air conditioning units
- Air handling units
- Transformers
- UPS (Inverters) and associated batteries
- Distribution panels including electrical panel boards
- Control panels including fire alarm, fire suppression, preaction, and auxiliary or remote power supplies

The architectural minimum dimensions surrounding SNF patient bed location(s) providing sub-acute bed(s) must comply with the current code. Bed clearances shall comply with minimum distance requirements in CBC Section 1225.5.1.2.2. This facilitates proper function of the equipment and staff access to the patient. (Refer to the Remodel CAN 2-102.6).

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| Original signed    | 10/10/12   |
| <hr/> Paul Coleman | <hr/> Date |