

# Alabama Department of Public Health



## COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT PHYSICAL PLANT AND EQUIPMENT STANDARDS



JUNE, 1988





STATE OF ALABAMA  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

DONALD E. WILLIAMSON, M.D. ♦ STATE HEALTH OFFICER

MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 12, 1994

TO: Assistant State Health Officers  
County Health Department Administrators

FROM: Donald E. Williamson, M.D.  
State Health Officer *DEW*

RE: Review of Building Plans

The State Board of Health adopted the County Health Department Physical Plant and Equipment Standards at their May 17, 1989, meeting. It is the responsibility of central office, area and county management to implement these standards. Facilities Management at the central office has specific responsibility for determining compliance with the Board's standards.


Plans for new construction or alternation must be approved by Facilities Management before construction begins. The review of plans will be for compliance with the Board's standards. I also expect a pre-design conference on projects which will include Facilities Management staff, county health department administrator, project architect, and any area staff involved with the project.

DEW/blm

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH  
COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT PHYSICAL PLANT AND EQUIPMENT STANDARDS  
SUPPLEMENT NO. 1

The State Committee of Public Health approved the following changes in the "County Health Department Physical and Plant Equipment Standards":

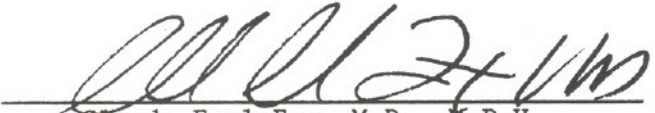
1. Paragraph 109.0, D., 2., d., "Examination rooms contain at least 100 square feet. If the room is also used for the nurse's office, a minimum of 120 square feet is provided. Rooms are well ventilated. All examination rooms are designed for single patient examination only."
2. Paragraph 109.0, D., 8., d., (2), "Dental Unit."
3. Paragraph 111.0, B., "A separate office with at least 120 square feet is provided for the environmental health services director."
4. Paragraph 112.0, E., "A home health supply space, which can be secured, is provided and contains a minimum of 100 square feet. If durable medical equipment is stored, a separate secure storage room or space is provided."

  
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Claude Earl Fox, M.D./ M.P.H.  
State Health Officer

## PREFACE

The County Health Department Physical Plant and Equipment Standards are intended to improve the condition, design, size, and equipment of county health departments in the state and to maintain these capital assets in good condition. Quality health services, efficiently delivered, and in the quantity needed by the public, are highly dependent upon the physical environment in which services are delivered. Presently, the physical plant of many county health departments is limiting our ability to deliver quality health services in an efficient manner. Some facilities are deteriorating to the point of disrupting services and potentially threatening continuation of services.

It is our contention that county health departments should not be second-rate facilities, and we recognize that modernization of facilities and equipment will require considerable resources. We must begin now to vigorously pursue obtaining the financial resources and other actions necessary to achieve our goal of modern, well-equipped facilities. The Physical Plant and Equipment Standards are the first step in the process. The Standards serve as the basis for determining facility and equipment needs, as well as the standards for modernization and new construction projects. County health department staffs and area and state staffs are expected to comply with these standards in service delivery, alterations to existing buildings, and new construction.

  
Claude Earl Fox, M.D., M.P.H.  
State Health Officer

  
Date



ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH  
COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT  
PHYSICAL PLANT AND EQUIPMENT STANDARDS  
JULY, 1988

100.0 County Health Department Site

The county health department is located at a site:

- A. Enabling easy access from main thoroughfares.
- B. In an environment harmonious for health services delivery and be located, by priority, in the following location:
  - 1. Near or within reasonable distance from the population served.
  - 2. Near other health care providers or social services utilized by the target population.
- C. Near public transportation if available in the city.
- D. With adequate off-street, paved parking spaces for employees and patients.
- E. With adequate lighting outside building and in parking area.
- F. With fire hydrants located in proximity of the site. If not, describe fire control measures.
- G. Having space sufficient for building expansion to one-half existing space (single-story building), or
- H. If existing space is not sufficient, adjoining space is vacant.

100.1 Directional Signs

- A. Signs showing direction to county health department main offices, branches, and satellites are located at strategic points on main highways and streets and are in conformance with rules of the Alabama Highway Department and local ordinances.
- B. County health department building is identified by a sign on or in front of the building. The sign is large enough to be easily seen from the street and is a high quality presentation of the department's name.
- C. The interior of large buildings should have signs directing the public to specific services and other locations.

101.0 Structural Soundness

The building is structurally sound and free from leaks and excessive moisture.

102.0 Roof

Roof condition does not present leakage problems.

103.0 Heating and Air Conditioning

- A. Heating and air conditioning systems heat/cool all occupied parts of the building to comfortable temperature levels, according to standards of the American Society of Heating and Ventilating Engineers.
- B. Systems require minimum maintenance. Downtime in last 24 months has been not more than five days annually.
- C. Heating/Cooling systems have energy efficient features, e.g., automatic temperature controls. Ductwork is in good condition.
- D. Building is energy efficient.

104.0 Electrical

- A. Electrical supply for the building is adequate for current usage.
- B. Electrical wiring meets standards of National Electrical Code.
- C. Rooms have an adequate number of electrical receptacles for current operations and for proposed additional equipment.

105.0 Plumbing

- A. Plumbing meets Standard Plumbing Code.
- B. Water pressure, hot and cold, is at least 20 psi at each lavatory.
- C. Hot water equipment is adequate to maintain hot water temperature between 105 and 120°F to all exam/treatment rooms and rest rooms.
- D. Separate rest rooms are provided for male and female patients in the central waiting room. A water closet and lavatory are provided in each rest room. At least one separate rest room is provided for female staff and one for male staff on each floor of the building. Additional staff rest rooms may be indicated for large facilities.
- E. A lavatory with hot and cold water is provided in each examination, treatment, and laboratory room. Blade handles are provided on cold and hot water controls.
- F. At least one standard water fountain and one water fountain for the handicapped are provided on each floor.



106.0 Condition and Appearance of Exterior

- A. The condition of the building's exterior is sound and presents a clean, aesthetically acceptable appearance. Shrubbery and lawn are neat and grounds are well-kept. Outdoor signs are in good condition and appropriate for a health care facility. Commercial product signs are not displayed outside or inside. Other buildings such as storage and office units are in good condition and are also aesthetically acceptable.
- B. Windows are constructed to fit tightly. Screens are provided for nonstationary windows.

107.0 Condition and Appearance of Interior

- A. The interior of the building presents a clean, pleasant appearance. Floors, walls, ceilings, and doors are in good condition. Type of flooring and wall covering permits efficient cleaning.
- B. Lighting fixtures produce bright illumination in all areas where artificial lighting is needed.
- C. Carpet, if used, must be flame retardant and be easily cleaned. Carpet is not used in treatment, exam, laboratory rooms, and other clinical rooms.
- D. The building is free of asbestos, unless the asbestos can be encapsulated as determined by the Environmental Division of the State Health Department.

108.0 Safety and Convenience

- A. In buildings with three or more stories, emergency lighting systems are provided to adequately light corridors, clinical areas, exit signs, and stairways.
- B. Exit doors open in the direction of exit travel.
- C. In multilevel buildings, at least one elevator is provided.
- D. Stairways are well lighted. Handrails are provided and securely installed.
- E. Fire extinguishers are located every 75 feet. At least two are provided.
- F. The building is designed in accordance with business occupancies as defined in the 1985 National Fire Protection Association Life Safety Code. No highly flammable materials, such as gasoline, are stored in the building.
- G. Approved illuminated exit signs are installed in corridors and passageways to indicate direction of exit.

- H. Buildings comply with ANSI 117.1, "Making Buildings and Facilities Accessible and Usable by the Physically Handicapped," and "Barrier Free Design Standard" promulgated by the State Fire Marshal's Office.

109.0 Space Design and Equipment

A. General

1. Space available is adequate to avoid overcrowding of employees and promote efficient operations.
2. Interior design supports efficient operations.
3. Interior partitions are constructed of materials, e.g., sheetrock, which can be removed or replaced as interior functional needs change.
4. Design of new facilities incorporates features supporting future expansion with minimum alteration of the facility and promotes energy conservation.

B. Waiting Area

1. The central waiting area accommodates twice the number of patients and visitors served during peak periods. The waiting area is adjacent to the intake/reception area and does not interfere or obstruct passage to exit doors and corridors to other parts of the building. Preferably, a small, separate waiting room equipped with small chairs and a television is provided for children or a television is provided in the central waiting area.
2. Subwaiting rooms are provided in the clinical area.
3. Seating is made of durable, safe materials and is movable for efficient floor cleaning.
4. A small, separate waiting room is provided for patients with illnesses which should be isolated from other patients. Air from this room will be exhausted to the outside.

C. Information and Intake Area

1. A counter, window, or office where people can obtain information is clearly marked and visible as people enter the building. The information point is in conjunction with other office functions so that employees are not isolated and not assigned only to the information tasks.
2. Discussion of personal matters with patients must be conducted in privacy. Preferably, intake rooms are provided in the central office area at the ratio of one room per intake clerk.



Interview booths, provided at the same ratios as rooms, are secondary choices. As a minimum, sectioned counters are provided. These spaces may also be used for WIC voucher pick-up.

3. The information point and the intake area are located near the central waiting area.
4. The size, construction, and design of the above spaces allows for future increase in the number of intake areas available.

#### D. Clinic Space

##### 1. Location

The clinical area is located in proximity to the central waiting area and is designed to promote efficient operations and expansion.

##### 2. Examination/Treatment Rooms

- a. A minimum of four examination rooms are provided in each main or branch facility. The number of examination rooms provided should be at the rate of one room per 25 (average) encounters per day.
- b. One of the examination rooms is designated for STD, TB, and other communicable disease patients. This room has an exhaust system to the outside and an ultraviolet light.
- c. Examination rooms are arranged in clusters of four or at least four in series opening off a corridor. In larger facilities, exam rooms may be designated for pediatric and adult care.
- d. Examination rooms contain at least <sup>120</sup>120 square feet. Rooms are well ventilated. All examination rooms are designed for single patient examination only.
- e. The swing of doors to exam rooms minimizes visibility of exam table from the corridor.
- f. Exam rooms are identified by numerals or letters.
- g. Equipment includes:
  - (1) Modern and comfortable examination table. If exam room is used for OB/GYN, table is equipped with adjustable, rotating stirrups. Step stool is available in each room. At least one pediatric exam table is available in the clinic area.

- (2) Flexible-Neck Exam Light or Equivalent
  - (3) Adjustable Stool
  - (4) Chair for Patient
  - (5) Privacy Curtain or Equivalent for Patient Clothes Changing
  - (6) Cabinet Space
  - (7) Counter Space for Supplies and for Writing Space
  - (8) If the exam room is used as the provider's office, a telephone is provided. Newly constructed exam rooms shall be equipped with telephone outlets.
  - (9) Sphygmomanometer (adult obese, pediatric, adult standard, and at least one mercury sphygmomanometer)
  - (10) Stethoscope
  - (11) Otoscope (pneumatic)
  - (12) Opthamaloscope
  - (13) Reflex Hammer
  - (14) Flashlight
  - (15) At Least One Doppler in the Clinical Area
- h. A drug closet or cabinet is provided in each clinical area.

3. Pre-examination/Treatment Room

- a. At least one room is provided for pre-examination/treatment procedures. The room may also be used for laboratory services if the facility has six or less exam rooms. The room contains at least 140 square feet and is at or near exam rooms.
- b. The room contains:
  - (1) Infant and Adult Scales
  - (2) Infant and Juvenile Height Anthropometric Measurement
  - (3) Bassinet
  - (4) Chairs for Patient and Provider



- (5) Counter Space and Sink with Hot and Cold Water Supply
  - (6) Refrigerator if refrigeration space in laboratory is not adequate for prevention of cross contamination. Refrigerator is equipped with thermometer.
- c. At least one pre-examination/treatment room is provided for every eight examination/treatment rooms.

4. Laboratory

- a. If facility has seven or more exam rooms, at least one separate room is provided for laboratory procedures. The room contains a minimum of 180 square feet. A larger space is required if the laboratory serves more than 16 examination/treatment rooms. The laboratory is located near the pre-examination and examination rooms.
- b. Cooling/heating systems are capable of maintaining room temperature between 68 and 78°F. The room is well ventilated and humidity controlled.
- c. Electrical outlets are located every three feet of counter space and on at least two different circuits in county health departments with separate laboratory rooms.
- d. Built-in counter space is provided with a sink and hot/cold water supply. A counter or desk is provided for administrative work. Adequate storage cabinets are provided.
- e. Laboratory equipment in the facility includes as a minimum:
  - (1) Centrifuge for blood and hematocrits. Hematocrit reader if not on centrifuge head.
  - (2) Hemoglobin Analyzer
  - (3) Microscope (Gram stain and KOH capability)
  - (4) Blood Glucose Analyzer
  - (5) Chair with arm rest extension for collecting blood samples.
  - (6) Incubator for Cultures
  - (7) RPR Rotator

(8) High intensity incandescent desk light (60 watts minimum) for reading RPRs, streps, pregnancy tests.

(9) Refrigerator with Thermometer

5. Patient Rest Rooms

A rest room is provided at or near the laboratory.

6. Audio and Visual Testing Room

a. A room is provided for audio and visual testing. The size and design of the room accommodates visual testing.

b. An audiometer and visual screening equipment are provided.

7. Clinical Office Space

a. A private office is provided for the nurse supervisor.

b. Single or multioccupancy office space is provided for clinical nurses, physicians, communicable disease representatives, health educator, social worker, and nutritionist. A minimum of 50 square feet per person is provided.

c. At least one general counseling room with a minimum of 100 square feet is provided.

8. Dental

a. Dental treatment facilities will be located to serve a regional population. Facilities serving an individual county will be justified on the basis of demand/need for services and private sector services to the target population.

b. Treatment facilities should be located in at least one location in each region as determined by unmet needs.

c. New construction in each region will consider the need to include dental treatment equipment. If provision of the service is not feasible and justified at the time of new construction planning, space should be provided for future dental equipment installation and include stubbed plumbing, electrical wiring availability, and other equipment provisions. Space should accommodate two dental chairs and an office space. The dental treatment space should contain at least 160 square feet and the dental office 120 square feet.



d. Dental treatment facilities include:

- (1) Dental Chair(s)
- (2) Suction Unit
- (3) Air Pressure Unit
- (4) Cold Water Supply
- (5) Lavatory with Hot and Cold Water Supply
- (6) X-Ray
- (7) X-Ray Developer
- (8) Counter Space and Cabinets

9. Radiology

In facilities constructed after the effective date of these standards, radiology services will be obtained from other service providers under referral arrangements, unless otherwise approved by the State Health Officer.

10. Supply Room

A medical supply room containing at least 140 square feet is provided. An additional 20 square feet is provided for each examination room in excess of four rooms.

11. Other Space and Equipment

An autoclave is provided in the clinical area if nondisposable instruments, e.g., metal specula, are used.

12. The design of new facilities have clinically-related offices and rooms located in the clinical area in such a manner to permit conversion of these spaces to examination rooms as service demands increase. Spaces have plumbing stubbed and electrical wiring available as needed for an exam room.

110.0 Medical Records Storage

- A. The active medical records storage area is located in proximity to the intake and clinical areas and in an area manned during business hours. The area is large enough to file three times the average number of active records during the last three years and can be secured with locked doors.
- B. An administrative work area such as a desk or counter is provided.

111.0 Environmental Offices

- A. An office space of at least 120 square feet is provided for each environmentalist. The space may be a private office, cubicle, or multioccupancy office. If the latter, the desks and work area for each environmentalist are separated from other environmentalists' work area by solid room dividers to allow privacy and reduce sound interference.
- B. A separate office with at least <sup>120</sup>~~150~~ square feet is provided for the environmental health services director.
- C. Each office or work area is equipped with a telephone and is well lighted and ventilated.
- D. A room or space containing at least 200 square feet is provided for plan review and storage. The room is equipped with a drafting table with boom light, stool, and counter and sink with hot and cold water supply.
- E. If full-time clerical support is provided, at least 170 square feet provided for each secretary.
- F. A refrigerator/freezer combination is provided for samples if storage space is not available at other locations in the facility.
- G. A waiting room or space is provided near the environmental offices if the offices are remotely located from the central waiting room.
- H. Equipment provided each environmentalist and as appropriate to the duties performed by the environmentalist includes:
  - 1. Clinometer
  - 2. Level and Tripod
  - 3. Grade Stick
  - 4. Gravel Probe
  - 5. 100 Foot Measuring Tape
  - 6. Camera
  - 7. Ice Chests
  - 8. Ruler
  - 9. Flashlight
  - 10. Light Meter
  - 11. Probe Thermometer
  - 12. Maximum Registering Thermometer
  - 13. Calculator
  - 14. One or More Memory Typewriters if Full-Time Secretary is Assigned to Environmental Offices

112.0 Home Health Offices

- A. A private office is provided for the home health coordinator.
- B. Separate office space is provided for the home health secretary and is equipped with a telephone. The home health records and file cabinets may be stored in the secretary's office space.
- C. Office space/work station for home health nurses is provided at a minimum of 75 square feet per nurse. Work space is provided for aides. This space may be provided in single or multioccupancy



offices. A telephone is provided at each nurse's desk. Cabinets for storing nurses' bags are available and book shelves for reference library.

- D. A room which can be locked is provided for home health record storage.
- E. A home health supply space which can be secured is located in the central supply room with a minimum of 140 square feet provided. If durable medical equipment is stored, a <sup>120</sup> separate secure storage room or space is provided.
- F. Equipment provided for home health offices includes:
  - 1. Separate Telephone Lines
  - 2. Copy Machine
  - 3. Personal Computer with Printer
  - 4. File Cabinets
  - 5. Tape Recorders for Nurses
  - 6. Transcriber for Secretary

#### 113.0 Administrative Offices

- A. A general administrative office is provided. A work station is provided for each clerical employee which may be the intake station. If the number of business office clerical employees exceeds six, a private office for the clerical supervisor/business office manager is provided. In counties with 100,000 or more population, a separate office with a reception counter is provided for the vital statistics registrar and a secure file room is provided adjacent to the vital statistics registrar's office for vital records.
- B. The business office area is sufficient size to accommodate personnel, desks, files, and other equipment. Size of the area will accommodate future growth and expansion. The office is designed to control entry and has doors with locks. The business office is part of the patient reception/exit area unless the volume of patients justifies a separate office.
- C. Equipment includes:
  - 1. Personal Computer(s) or Terminal(s) with Printer
  - 2. One or More Memory Typewriters
  - 3. Copy Machine

4. Calculators
5. File Cabinets and Storage Cabinets or Storage Room
6. Desk or Adequate Work Space for Each Clerical Employee

114.0 Central Storage

- A. A room is provided for storage of county health department materials, supplies, and extra equipment. The room contains a minimum of 400 square feet and can be secured with lockable doors. The size and number of central storage rooms are based on the size of the facility. The room is located in the building to permit future expansion.
- B. An outside storage area is provided if lawn mowers, gasoline, etc., are stored at the facility.

115.0 Classroom or Meeting Room

A classroom or meeting room which can be used for patient education, staff meetings, and by public groups is provided. The room contains a minimum of 600 square feet and is equipped with comfortable, durable seats and a television and VCR.

116.0 Inactive Record Storage

Inactive medical records may be stored in the central storage room if protected from unauthorized use. If protection cannot be provided, a separate secure storage room is provided.

117.0 Janitor's Closet

A janitor's closet is provided on each floor and contains a floor receptor or service sink and space for storing housekeeping supplies and equipment.

Prepared By:

Capital Expansion  
Alabama Department of Public Health  
434 Monroe Street, Room 315  
Montgomery, AL 36130-1701



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