

## Wireless Resident/Staff Communication and Response System

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### **Background**

Through the construction of new long-term care homes and the redevelopment of existing homes, the ministry has received requests for approval of wireless resident/staff communication and response systems.

**Section 17 (1) of the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007 states that:**

***Every licensee of a long-term care home shall ensure that the home is equipped with a resident-staff communication and response system that,***

- (a) can be easily seen, accessed and used by residents, staff and visitors at all times;***
- (b) is on at all times;***
- (c) allows calls to be cancelled only at the point of activation;***
- (d) is available at each bed, toilet, bath and shower location used by residents;***
- (e) is available in every area accessible by residents;***
- (f) clearly indicates when activated where the signal is coming from; and***
- (g) in the case of a system that uses sound to alert staff, is properly calibrated so that the level of sound is audible to staff.***

The ministry recognizes the emergence of new technologies in long-term care. In light of this, the ministry has set forth a number of approval criteria for wireless resident/staff communication and response systems that captures the essence of both the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007 requirements and, where applicable, the Long-Term Care Home Design Manual standards.

After review of wireless resident/staff communication and response system specifications, the ministry has approved these systems in a small number of new/redeveloped homes that have been able to demonstrate that a wireless resident/staff communication and response system can meet all ministry requirements.

### **Approval Criteria/Conditions**

In any type of resident/staff communication and response system the required features include:

- cancellation at point of activation only
- available to residents and staff in all key areas where residents have access
- ease of use/access
- active at all times (i.e. the system can not be turned off)
- connection to a back-up call power source or system in the event of a power shut down

In addition to the above noted features, in order for a wireless resident/staff communication and response system to meet ministry requirements the following conditions/criteria must be met and must continue to be met.

### ***Bedrooms***

The personal pendant (also called an activation device, a badge and a button) that will be 'worn' by the resident may also be the pendant that is required at the bedside. Therefore, if a resident refuses to wear the pendant, it can be placed at the bedside in an area most accessible to that

resident. It is not expected that the resident will wear the pendant to bed. When not being 'worn', the pendant can be attached to the resident bed head board, side rail or pillow, whichever is determined to be the best place for that particular resident to be able to access. It is recognized that operationally this may be additional work for staff. However, when using the wireless system, it will be the responsibility of the staff to ensure that whether or not the resident is wearing the pendant, it is made available at the bed any time the resident is there. The challenge for staff will be ensuring that the pendant is attached to clothing, transferred to 'other' clothing and attached to the bed when not 'worn'.

### ***Washrooms***

In addition to a personal and/or bedside pendant, a pendant must be permanently installed and accessible to the resident at every toilet in the long-term care home, used by residents. This ensures residents using a washroom have access to a nurse call system, as per ministry requirements. The Operator must ensure that the pendant is accessible to the resident at the toilet. If the toilet is centrally located, the pendant can be attached to one of the grab bars. If the grab bars come down from behind the toilet, the one grab bar that will remain down/stationary must have the pendant attached to it. If the toilet is close to one wall and the pendant is attached to this wall, the Operator must ensure that the resident can reach the pendant from the toilet. In some cases, a cord may need to be attached to the pendant to allow for better accessibility.

### ***Common Areas***

A pendant must be installed in all common areas that are accessed by residents, including dining rooms, lounges, program/activity areas, chapel, therapy rooms, beauty salon, cafes, shower and tub rooms (both sides of the tubs), etc. These pendants must be placed in an area where staff and residents can easily access the device. In doing so, if the personal pendant is kept at the bedside or a resident refuses to wear one, the home has met the ministry requirements for all common areas to have access to a nurse call system.

### ***Door Security***

A wireless nurse call system can be integrated with the home's door security system but the pendant worn by the resident can not be used as the only source for activating locking devices on doors. In other words, the pendant cannot be a stand alone system for securing doors leading into stairwells, outdoor areas and into non long-term care areas. Therefore, if a resident is not wearing a pendant, the resident is not at risk of existing the building as these doors must still be equipped with magnetic locks and back-up alarms.

For further information you may contact:

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