

# Minimum Nurse Staffing Requirements for Nursing Homes and Assisted Living Facilities

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## Issue

Does Connecticut have minimum nurse staffing requirements for nursing homes and assisted living facilities?

## Summary

The Department of Public Health (DPH) regulates the state's nursing homes and assisted living facilities, and specifies minimum nurse staffing requirements for both. As part of nursing home licensure, DPH requires homes to employ sufficient nurses and nurse's aides to provide appropriate patient care 24 hours per day, seven days per week. Specific minimum nurse staffing requirements depend on the type of home (i.e., chronic and convalescent nursing home (CCNH) or rest home with nursing supervision (RHNS)) and the time of day (see Table 1 below).

For assisted living facilities, the department does not license the buildings, but instead licenses and regulates the "assisted living services agencies" (ALSAs) that provide assisted living services. ALSAs can only provide these services at managed residential communities (MRCs). DPH regulations require an ALSA to designate a registered nurse (RN) with specified experience to be on-call 24 hours per day, reachable by telephone, and available to make an on-site visit. Additionally, ALSAs must have an RN on-site to supervise assisted living services for a certain number of hours each week, depending on the number of full-time nurses and assisted living aides working in the facility.

# Minimum Nurse Staffing Requirements

## *Nursing Homes*

Minimum nurse staffing requirements vary depending on the level of care the nursing home provides. DPH licenses nursing homes at two levels of care: (1) CCNHs, which are skilled nursing facilities and (2) RHNSs, which are intermediate care facilities. (Nursing homes generally have been phasing out RHNS beds or converting them to CCNH beds.) DPH regulations require nursing homes to employ sufficient nurses and nurse’s aides to provide appropriate patient care 24 hours per day, seven days per week. Table 1 shows the minimum nurse staffing requirements for each type of facility and the time of day ([Conn. Agency Regs., § 19-13-D8t\(m\)](#)).

**Table 1: Minimum Nurse Staffing Requirements for Nursing Homes**

Direct Care Personnel	CCNH		RHNS	
	7 a.m. to 9 p.m.	9 p.m. to 7 a.m.	7 a.m. to 9 p.m.	9 p.m. to 7 a.m.
Licensed Nursing Personnel	0.47 hours per patient (hpp) (28 min.)	0.17 hpp (10 min.)	0.23 hpp (14 min.)	0.08 hpp (5 min.)
Total Nurses and Nurse Aide Personnel	1.40 hpp (1 hr. 24 min.) * must have one registered nurse (RN) on duty and one licensed nurse on each patient occupied floor at all times	0.50 hpp (30 min.) * must have one RN on duty and one licensed nurse on each patient occupied floor at all times	0.70 hpp (42 min.) * must have one nurse’s aide on each patient occupied floor and intercom communications with a licensed nurse at all times	0.17 hpp (10 min.) * must have one nurse’s aide on each patient occupied floor and intercom communications with a licensed nurse at all times

In meeting the above staffing requirements, nursing homes cannot include the (1) nursing director, if the home has more than 60 beds, or (2) assistant nursing director, if the home has more than 120 beds ([Conn. Agency Regs., § 19-13-D8t\(m\)](#)).

## ***Assisted Living Facilities***

DPH does not license assisted living facilities (i.e., the buildings). It instead licenses ALSAs, which can only provide assisted living services at MRCs. State law does not require MRCs to be licensed, but they must meet certain requirements and provide certain core services to their residents before they can allow an ALSA to provide services to their residents. An MRC can either become licensed as an ALSA and provide services itself or contract with a separate ALSA to provide the services ([Conn. Agencies. Regs., § 19-13-D105](#)).

DPH regulations require an ALSA to designate an RN to be on-call 24 hours per day. The on-call RN must have two years of full-time or full-time equivalent clinical experience in nursing, at least one year of which must be in a home health care agency or community health program that included care of the sick at home. The on-call RN can be the supervisor of assisted living services (see below) or another RN. An ALSA can contract for on-call RNs with a licensed home health care agency. The on-call nurse must be reachable by telephone and be available to make an on-site visit, if necessary, to (1) respond to assisted living aides while giving care to clients and (2) respond to client emergencies ([Conn. Agencies. Regs. § 19-13-D105\(j\)](#)).

Additionally, regulations require an ALSA to have a supervisor of assisted living services who must also be an RN. The supervisor must be on-site (1) at least 20 hours per week for every 10 or fewer full-time or full-time equivalent (FTE) licensed nurses or assisted living aides or (2) at least 40 hours per week for every 20 or fewer full-time or FTE licensed nurses or assisted living aides. In addition, the ALSA must provide at least 10 hours per week of licensed nurse staffing for each additional 10 or fewer full-time or FTE assisted living aides ([Conn. Agencies. Regs., § 19-13-D105\(j\)](#)).

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