



Mike Braun, Governor
State of Indiana

Indiana Bureau of Disabilities Services

BDS POLICY

Bureau of Disabilities Services (BDS)-Environmental Requirements for Home and Community-Based Services

Policy Number: BDS 460 1216 039

Effective Date: July 12, 2026

Revision History: Replacing Policy BDDS 460 1216 039 (effective date 12/16/11).

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to establish minimum environmental standards for Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) waiver providers to ensure that Individuals receiving services through the Bureau of Disabilities Services (BDS) are supported in safe, accessible, and person-centered settings that promote health, dignity, independence, and community inclusion.

Scope: This policy applies to all HCBS waiver providers authorized or contracted by BDS and governs all residential and service delivery settings where BDS-funded services are provided.

Policy Statement(s): BDS requires all HCBS waiver providers to maintain service environments that:

- Protect the health, safety, and welfare of Individuals.
- Ensure accessibility and reasonable accommodations.
- Uphold Individual rights to privacy, dignity, autonomy, and choice; and
- Support full community integration consistent with person-centered practices.

All settings must comply with applicable federal and state requirements, including 42 CFR § 441.530 (HCBS Settings Rule), 460 IAC, 455 IAC, and all relevant state and local laws. Providers are responsible for ongoing monitoring and maintenance to ensure continued compliance.

Compliance of Environment to the Individual's Person-Centered Individualized Support Plan (PCISP)

1. A Provider designated in the Individual's PCISP as responsible for providing environmental and living arrangement support for the Individual shall ensure that an Individual's physical environment includes modifications and adaptations in compliance with the requirements of:
 - a. the Individual's PCISP; and
 - b. this policy.
2. The Provider responsible for any and all modifications and adaptations to an Individual's residence that are necessary to comply with the Individual's PCISP and this policy is the Individual's Residential Provider when the Provider owns, leases, or rents the residence in which the Individual lives.

3. In residential settings other than those identified in this section under 2., authorization of Home Modifications may be requested from the Division of Disability, Aging, and Rehabilitative Services (DDARS).

Compliance of Environment with Building and Fire Codes

1. A Provider designated in an Individual's PCISP as responsible for providing environmental and living arrangement support shall ensure that an Individual's living areas comply with the requirements of this section.
2. An Individual's living areas shall meet all applicable Indiana Code and local building ordinances for single family dwellings or multiple family dwellings.
3. An Individual's living areas shall meet all applicable Indiana Code and local ordinances on fire safety and fire prevention.
4. Providers shall ensure that living areas maintain at least two unobstructed means of exit. Exits shall be readily accessible to Individuals and staff and free from obstruction at all times.
5. Providers should ensure exit routes including hallways, doorways, and stairwells remain clear and accessible at all times so that Individuals can move freely and evacuate safely without restriction.
6. Any limitation to an Individual's ability to exit independently must be addressed in their PCISP.

Compliance Within the Living Environment

1. A Provider designated in an Individual's PCISP as responsible for providing environmental and living arrangement support for the Individual shall be responsible for maintaining the living environment in a manner that protects the Individual's health, safety, and welfare at all times. Provider responsibilities include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Routine monitoring of physical environment for safety hazards, which includes, at a minimum, a signed environmental assessment that is conducted every 60 days as outlined in 460 IAC 6-17-3;
 - b. Timely correction of hazards or conditions the Provider can reasonably prevent or correct based on their responsibilities, resources, and role without limiting the Individual's rights in their own home;
 - c. When a hazard or condition is not within the Provider's control, the Provider shall take appropriate action which may include promptly reporting to the responsible party such as a landlord, document the concerns and attempts to resolve, and support the Individual in locating other resources and understanding their rights and options while the issue is being addressed;
 - d. Implementation of written safety, security, privacy and emergency policies; and
 - e. Ensuring the environment supports the Individual's functional abilities, communication needs, and documented needs.

Note: The Individual's case manager shall note in the Community Living section of the PCISP when the Provider is responsible for providing environmental and living arrangement support. The Individual's case manager shall also ensure that the Provider is in compliance when conducting visits to the home.

Compliance With Written Safety and Security Policies and Procedures

1. A Provider designated in an Individual's PCISP as responsible for providing environmental and living arrangement support shall:
 - a. Maintain written safety and security policies and procedures for an Individual in:
 - i. the Provider's office; and
 - ii. the Individual's home;
2. Train all owners, directors, officers, employees, contractors, subcontractors, or agents performing management, administrative, or direct service to an Individual on behalf of the Provider in implementing these policies and procedures.
3. The written policies and procedures mentioned in this section shall address, at a minimum, the following:
 - a. Biohazard Disposal
 - i. Written policies and procedures addressing biohazard disposal within the living environment that shall include:
 1. Identification of biohazard materials, including but not limited to, blood, bodily fluids contaminated sharps, when applicable, and soiled materials presenting a health risk.
 2. Proper containment, handling, and disposal of biohazard materials in accordance with applicable public health standards.
 3. Use of appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).
 4. Training requirements for staff responsible for biohazard cleanup.
 5. Documentation and reporting of biohazard-related incidents.
 6. How Providers are ensuring appropriate biohazard disposal supplies are available when required by the Individual's needs or the services provided.
 - b. Emergency and Crisis Response
 - i. Written policies and procedures that shall describe when and how to notify law enforcement agencies in an emergency crisis.
 - ii. How Providers are ensuring the scheduling and completion of evacuation drills.
 - iii. Written policies and procedures shall be followed in emergencies or crises requiring extraordinary efforts to ensure health, safety, and welfare, including but not limited to:
 1. tornado;
 2. fire;
 3. missing person;
 4. snow or other winter hazard;
 5. flood;
 6. bomb threat;
 7. workplace violence;
 8. residential violence;
 9. a major natural disaster, such as a pandemic, which severely limits the Provider's ability to deliver services.
 - c. Residential Violence Policies and Procedures
 - i. Written policies and procedures that address residential violence that shall include, at a minimum:
 1. Prevention strategies to reduce the risk of violence within the living environment.

2. Procedures for responding to incidents involving Individuals, staff, visitors, or household members.
3. Immediate actions to ensure safety, including separation, and emergency response.
4. Criteria for notifying law enforcement and other required entities.
5. Documentation and reporting requirements consistent with BDS and DDARS policy; and
6. Post-incident review and follow-up actions, including support for the Individual and any necessary changes to the PCISP or environment.

Note: Residential Violence Policies and Procedures shall be developed and implemented in alignment with the Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Settings Rule and shall uphold and protect all Individual rights, including but not limited to, the rights to privacy, dignity, autonomy, freedom from coercion or restraint, and the ability to control personal resources and daily activities. Such policies shall emphasize de-escalation, trauma-informed practices, least restrictive interventions, and individualized supports.

Fire Safety Equipment – Portable Fire Extinguisher

1. Providers shall ensure that approved portable fire extinguishers are available, accessible, and maintained within the living environment.
2. Portable fire extinguishers shall:
 - a. be multipurpose (Class A, B, and C);
 - b. be certified by a nationally recognized testing laboratory for residential use;
 - c. be appropriately sized and operable by staff or household members; and
 - d. be maintained in accordance with manufacturer instructions.
3. Fire extinguishers may be obtained through consumer retail outlets or licensed fire-prevention service providers. Retail-purchased extinguishers meeting policy requirements shall be deemed compliant.
4. Monthly visual inspections may be conducted by designated staff and/or caregivers. Professional servicing is not required unless mandated by local code or manufacturer guidance.
5. Fire extinguishers shall be replaced or recharged after any use or when determined to be inoperable.

Lighting Requirements

1. Providers shall ensure adequate lighting throughout the living environments to support safety, mobility, and supervision.
2. All settings shall have adequate lighting for safety and accessibility. The type of lighting (overhead fixtures, lamps, natural light) must respect Individual preference, except where specific safety or accessibility needs require otherwise. Hallways and stairs should also be properly illuminated for safe passage.
3. Providers shall ensure lighting fixtures and bulbs are maintained in working order at all times.

Smoke Detectors and Carbon Monoxide (CO) Detectors

1. Providers shall ensure that smoke detectors (and carbon monoxide detectors when applicable) are installed and maintained in accordance with all applicable Indiana Code and local fire safety ordinances, as well as local building codes.
2. Providers are responsible for promptly replacing batteries or units when smoke detectors emit beeping or chirping sounds indicating low batteries, malfunction, or end-of-life.
3. Maintenance and corrective actions related to smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors shall be documented.
4. Conduct (and document) regular testing of Carbon Monoxide (CO) detectors (at least monthly, or per manufacturer guidance).

Bedroom Door Locks-Privacy and Autonomy

1. An Individual shall have a bedroom door that is lockable by the Individual to ensure privacy, dignity, and autonomy within the living environment.
2. Any lock installed on an Individual's bedroom door shall be:
 - a. controlled solely by the Individual, meaning only the Individual has the ability to engage or disengage the lock;
 - b. designed in a manner that does not allow staff, providers, or other household members to routinely control or override the lock; and
 - c. appropriate for residential use and consistent with applicable building and fire safety codes.
3. Providers shall not install or utilize locks that restrict an Individual's access to their bedroom or personal space unless all of the following have been addressed:
 1. The restriction is specifically documented in the Individual's PCISP.
 2. The restriction is supported by an assessed health or safety need.
 3. There is evidence of less restrictive alternatives that were tried and found ineffective.
 4. Informed consent and Human Rights Committee (HRC) approval is documented.
 5. The restriction complies with federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) guidance on rights restrictions; and
 6. The restriction includes a plan for ongoing review and restoration of full access when the need no longer exists.
4. Providers shall ensure that staff are trained on respecting an Individual's right to privacy and autonomy related to bedroom access and locking mechanisms.

Furnishing and Decoration—Individual Rights

1. Each Individual shall have the opportunity to furnish and decorate their space in a manner that reflects their personal preferences, cultural identity, and individual style.
2. Individuals shall be supported in making choices regarding furniture, wall décor, bedding, artwork, and personal belongings, consistent with applicable safety standards and standard lease or ownership requirements.

Training and Emergency Preparedness

1. Providers shall provide training to:
 1. owners, directors, officers, employees, contractors, subcontractors, or agents; and

2. the Individual, in the Individual's mode of communication; regarding emergency and crisis procedures.
2. Training shall include, at a minimum:
 1. evacuation procedures;
 2. responsibilities during drills;
 3. designated meeting locations;
 4. emergency contact numbers;
 5. awareness of fire extinguisher use and carbon monoxide detector alerts, including how to respond and when to evacuate;
 6. biohazard disposal procedures; and
 7. recognition and response to residential violence.
3. If an Individual is physically or functionally unable to follow emergency or crisis procedures, the Provider shall document:
 1. the Individual's limitations; and
 2. the Provider's plan to support the Individual during emergencies or crises.
4. Safe evacuation routes and the location of all exits.

Environmental Requirements for Non-residential Service Setting

1. Providers must comply with all state and local fire codes, including occupancy limits, fire-suppression systems, and emergency exits.
2. Buildings must maintain clear, unobstructed exit routes and functioning emergency lighting.
3. The setting must be clean, safe, and well-maintained with no hazards such as exposed wiring, broken flooring, or unsafe equipment.
4. The environment must comply with all applicable building, zoning, and health codes.
5. Adequate heating, cooling, ventilation, and lighting must be provided.
6. Restrooms must be accessible, sanitary, and equipped to meet the needs of Individuals with disabilities.
7. The setting must be physically accessible, including ramps, door widths, and pathways that meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards.
8. The setting shall be in compliance with HCBS Settings Rule requirements.

References:

- IC 12-8-1.6-4
- IC 12-9-1-1
- IC 12-9-2-3
- 42 CFR 441
- 455 IAC 2-20-1
- 460 IAC 6-8-3
- 460 IAC 6-14-4(c)
- 460 IAC 6-17-3(b)(11)
- 460 IAC 6-29-1
- 460 IAC 6-29-2
- 460 IAC 6-29-3
- 460 IAC 6-29-4

460 IAC 6-29-5
460 IAC 6-29-6
460 IAC 6-29-7

Authorized by:



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on: 5/28/2026
Date



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