

## DBHDS Office of Licensing

### Guidance on Ceiling Heights

RE: 12VAC35-105-280. (J.) Physical environment.

#### **Effective 06/09/2017**

In order to assist providers with understanding the ceiling height requirements for residential service locations (group home or sponsored residential home), the following guidance document has been created. This guidance document is based on building regulations outlined within the Virginia Uniform State Building Code (USBC).

Regulation 12VAC35-105-280. (J.) states: "For all program areas added after September 19, 2002, minimum room height shall be 7-1/2 feet."

The Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC) contains the building regulations that must be complied with when constructing a new building, structure, or an addition to an existing building. They must also be used when maintaining or repairing an existing building or renovating or changing the use of a building or structure. Buildings and structures meeting the statewide building code regulations would not need a variance to the licensing regulations.

Given this, the following outlines the measurements residential service locations (group home or sponsored home) must be in compliance with:

#### **Minimum Ceiling Height for Rooms within One or Two story homes:**

- All occupiable spaces, habitable spaces and hallways shall have a ceiling height of not less than 7 feet 6 inches.
- Bathrooms, kitchens, laundry rooms and storage rooms shall be permitted to have a ceiling height of not less than 7 feet. (The area above a bathtub with a shower head must have a ceiling of not less than 6 feet 8 inches).
- If there is a beam or duct work, it is permitted as long as it does not project more than 6 inches below the required ceiling height of 7 feet 6 inches.
- For rooms with sloped ceilings, at least 50 percent of the required floor area of the room must have a ceiling height of at least 7 feet 6 inches and no portion of the required floor area may have a ceiling height of less than 5 feet. If any portion of a room with a sloping ceiling measures less than 5 feet, this portion cannot be considered as contributing to the minimum required habitable area for that room.



### **Minimum Ceiling Height for Basements:**

- Portions of basements that do not contain habitable space such as hallways, bathrooms, laundry rooms or storage rooms shall have a ceiling height of not less than 6 feet 8 inches.
- Beams or duct work may project to within 6 feet 4 inches of the finished floor.

### **Definitions:**

1. Occupiable Space: A room or enclosed space designed for human occupancy in which individuals congregate, excluding those spaces intended primarily for other purposes, such as storage rooms and equipment rooms that are only occupied occasionally and for short periods of time.
2. Habitable space: A space in a building for living, sleeping, eating or cooking, or used as a home occupation. Bathrooms, closets, hallways, storage or utility spaces and similar areas are not considered habitable spaces.