

SHELTER

Shelter is emergency housing and related supportive services provided in a safe, protective environment for individuals and their children who are victimized by their current or former intimate partners.

SERVICE STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR SHELTER

1. A domestic violence shelter must provide access, admittance and residence in temporary shelter for victims of domestic violence and their children 24 hours a day, every day of the year.
2. Domestic violence shelter services may be provided through any of the following types of housing:
 - a. A physical shelter facility operated by a domestic violence program that primarily serves victims of domestic violence;
 - b. A safe home provided by a screened, trained private individual or family offering their private residence as time-limited safe shelter without financial compensation; and/or
 - c. Other accommodations, such as time-limited motel/hotel placement, and/or other direct placement programs providing safe housing, arranged and provided through a staff member of a domestic violence program.
3. A domestic violence program that provides safe shelter at locations separate from the primary shelter facility, including motel/hotel placement and/or other direct placement programs providing safe housing, must ensure that those accommodations are safe and that participants have access to a telephone and bathroom facilities, and that all doors to the accommodations have locks.
4. A domestic violence shelter must:
 - a. Maintain safety and security of residents as described in the program's policies;
 - b. Ensure that crisis intervention services are accessible, available and offered 24 hours a day, every day of the year, with trained advocates on-site to provide face-to-face emergency services;
 - c. Provide emergency food, clothing and personal hygiene items for residents and their children, free of charge;
 - d. Not require residents and non-residents to participate in religious groups or to use religious materials;
 - e. Not require residents to participate in supportive services as a condition of staying in shelter. Participation in supportive services must be voluntary.
 - f. Provide education and information about:
 - i. How batterers maintain control and dominance over their victims;
 - ii. The need to hold batterers accountable for their actions;
 - iii. The recognition that individuals victimized by domestic violence are responsible for their own life decisions and that batterers are responsible for their violent behavior; and
 - iv. The role of society in perpetuating violence against women and the social change necessary to eliminate violence against women, including the elimination of discrimination based on ethnicity, color, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability including substance abuse, economic or educational status, religion, HIV/AIDS or health status, and national origin; and
 - g. Have written policies concerning cultural sensitivity and other non-discriminatory provisions and procedures that prohibit discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, color, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability including substance abuse, economic or educational status, religion, HIV/AIDS or health status, national origin, or residency including county, state or country of origin.

SERVICE STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR SHELTER (CONTINUED)

5. A domestic violence shelter must ensure that program staff members:
 - a. Have immediate face-to-face contact with a new resident admitted to the shelter to determine emergency needs;
 - b. Initiate a face-to-face intake process with a new resident within eight hours after the resident's admission to the shelter;
 - c. Inform each resident about services to be provided by the shelter including, but not limited to:
 - i. Confidentiality rights and agreements, including records and accessibility;
 - ii. Release-of-information agreements;
 - iii. Resident rights including program complaint procedures; and
 - iv. An individual or family plan of self-defined needs and actions to address needed services and assist in maintaining safety.
 - d. Are trained in the dynamics of communal living including, but not limited to:
 - i. Conflict resolution;
 - ii. Facilitating group dynamics; and
 - iii. Parent/child dynamics and interactions.
6. A domestic violence shelter may have guidelines that promote communal living. House management meetings should be held regularly to facilitate communal living.
7. A domestic violence shelter should establish a length-of-stay policy that is flexible and that balances the needs of those victimized by intimate partners and the program's ability to meet those needs.
8. Domestic violence shelter staff members must assist those requesting emergency safe shelter in obtaining other temporary shelter if the primary shelter facility is full. The required minimum assistance to be offered by staff members of the domestic violence shelter in this situation is the provision of information and referrals to obtain alternative safe shelter, and notice of the right to call back for additional assistance.
9. Evaluation of the domestic violence shelter program must be conducted to ensure quality of services.
 - a. Most evaluation procedures should be voluntary and anonymous. Anonymous evaluations may include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Periodic satisfaction surveys; and/or
 - ii. Exit surveys.
 - b. Non-anonymous evaluations may include, but are not limited to:
 - i. An Advisory Board consisting of current and former emergency shelter residents and staff who review policies and procedures; and/or
 - ii. Focus groups.

MOTEL/HOTEL PLACEMENT BY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SHELTER PROGRAMS

1. Alternatives to shelter may include motel/hotel placement as a source of safe shelter in circumstances that include, but are not limited to:
 - a. The primary shelter facility is at capacity, and no space is available for those seeking emergency safe shelter;
 - b. The distance between the individual or family seeking safe shelter and the shelter facility prohibits immediate access to the facility;
 - c. The individual or family seeking safe shelter has special needs best served by shelter provision through a motel/hotel placement, including but not limited to the gender of the individual seeking shelter, wheelchair or other disability accessibility needs or circumstances, and/or adolescent male children accompanying the abused parent; and

MOTEL/HOTEL PLACEMENT BY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SHELTER PROGRAMS (CONTINUED)

- d. The former resident of the shelter facility no longer needs primary shelter but would benefit from program-managed subsidized or transitional housing services that are offered through a temporary motel/hotel placement.
2. Motel/hotel placement by domestic violence programs must abide by the “MCADSV Service Standards and Guidelines for Shelter.”
3. Evaluation of the domestic violence motel/hotel placement program must be conducted to ensure quality of services.
 - a. Most evaluation procedures should be voluntary and anonymous. Anonymous evaluations may include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Periodic satisfaction surveys; and/or
 - ii. Exit surveys.
 - b. Non-anonymous evaluations may include, but are not limited to:
 - i. An Advisory Board consisting of current and former emergency shelter residents and staff who review policies and procedures; and/or
 - ii. Focus groups.

SHELTER PROVISION THROUGH SAFE HOME PROVIDERS

1. A domestic violence program that offers safe shelter through private safe homes must document:
 - a. In-depth screening and monitoring of a safe home provider host family or individual, which includes an on-site review of the suitability of the private residence used as a safe home site for temporary safe shelter, background check with the Children’s Division of Department of Social Services and criminal background check on the host family or individual;
 - b. Completion of required domestic violence training by the safe home provider host family or individual;
 - c. Signed agreements between the safe home provider host family or individual regarding issues of confidentiality and the rights of individuals or families provided with safe shelter in the residence of the host family or individual;
 - d. Proof of liability insurance held by the safe home provider host family or individual; and
 - e. The availability of 24-hour accessibility to advocacy services through the domestic violence program that uses safe homes as shelter provision.
2. Shelter provision through safe home providers must abide by the “MCADSV Service Standards and Guidelines for Shelter.”
3. Evaluation of the domestic violence safe home program must be conducted to ensure quality of services.
 - a. Most evaluation procedures should be voluntary and anonymous. Anonymous evaluations may include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Periodic satisfaction surveys; and/or
 - ii. Exit surveys.
 - b. Non-anonymous evaluations may include, but are not limited to:
 - i. An Advisory Board consisting of current and former emergency shelter residents and staff who review policies and procedures; and/or
 - ii. Focus groups.