

Bulletin 24-2-6
Classification of patient care areas
Rule 24-000

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In 2002, Section 24 of the Ontario Electrical Safety Code (OESC) was amended to reflect the changing nature of health care and to recognize that procedures once reserved for hospitals are now being performed in medical clinics. The Scope of Section 24 was changed to include all types of health care facilities and not just hospitals. A “Health Care Facility” is defined as a set of physical infrastructure elements that are intended to support the delivery of specific health-related services.

Examples of Health Care Facilities include but are not limited to hospitals, rehabilitation facilities or group homes that provide extended, multi-level, psychiatric, or intermediate care, outpatient and surgical clinics, dental offices, doctors’ clinics, dialysis units, ultrasound and electro diagnosis (ECG, EEG, EMG) suites, chiropractic clinics, physiotherapy clinics, and physicians’ offices.

OESC Section 24 applies to electrical wiring and equipment within patient care areas of health care facilities and those portions of the electrical systems of health care facilities designated as essential electrical systems. The requirements are based on the classification of the patient care areas (e.g. basic, intermediate, or critical). This approach is consistent with that taken in CAN/CSA-Z32 Electrical Safety and Essential Electrical Systems in Health Care Facilities.

Patient Care Areas are areas within the health care facility that are intended primarily for the provision of diagnosis, therapy, or care. The Electrical Safety Authority (ESA) is responsible to ensure that all electrical wiring and equipment in the health care facility complies with the OESC and that wiring and equipment within the patient care areas also complies with the supplementary rules for electrical safety that are contained in Section 24 of the OESC.

ESA is not responsible for determining or classifying the patient care areas within a health care facility.

CAN/CSA-Z32 states that the administrator is responsible for determining whether an area of a health care facility should be classified as a patient care area and if so, whether it is a basic, intermediate, or critical area. CAN/CSA-Z32 defines the “Administrator” as the person responsible for operating the health care facility (or his or her designee). The administrator shall document those areas that are patient care areas and whether those areas are classified as basic care, intermediate care, or critical care. If no areas are to be classified, then this shall also be documented.

A copy of the patient care area classification document is required to be provided to ESA for the Inspector’s use when inspecting the installation of the electrical wiring and equipment within the facility for compliance with the OESC. If there are no classified patient care areas within the facility, then a letter stating that is required from the administrator.