

AFFORDABILITY AND CHOICE TODAY (A•C•T) STREAMLINED APPROVAL PROCESS PROJECT

**Improving Quality of Life
in Boarding Houses for the Elderly
Regroupement des résidences pour retraités du Québec
Montréal, Quebec**

Prepared for:

**Federation of Canadian Municipalities
Canadian Home Builders' Association
Canadian Housing and Renewal Association
Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation**

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FOREWORD

The project documented in this case study received funding assistance under the Affordability and Choice Today (A•C•T) Program. A•C•T is a joint initiative, managed by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the Canadian Home Builders' Association, and the Canadian Housing and Renewal Association, together with the funding agency Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. The A•C•T Program is administered by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

A•C•T, which was launched in January 1990, was designed to foster changes to planning and building regulations and residential development approval procedures in order to improve housing affordability, choice and quality. In 1998, the A•C•T Program was recognized by the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements as a best practice for improving the living environment.

Through A•C•T, grants are awarded to municipalities, private and non-profit builders and developers, planners and architects to undertake innovative regulatory reform initiatives in municipalities across Canada. Three types of projects are awarded grants under the A•C•T Program: Demonstration Projects, Streamlined Approval Process Projects, and Case Studies (of existing initiatives).

- *Demonstration Projects* involve the construction of innovative housing that demonstrates how modifications to planning and construction regulations can improve affordability, choice and quality.

- *Streamlined Approval Process Projects* involve the development of a method or an approach that reduces the time and effort needed to obtain approvals for housing projects.
- *Case Study* grants are awarded for the documentation of existing regulatory reform initiatives.

Change and innovation require the participation of all the players in the housing sector. A•C•T provides a unique opportunity for groups at the local level to work together to identify housing concerns, reach consensus on potential solutions, and implement actions. Consequently, a key component of A•C•T-sponsored projects is the participation and cooperation of various players in the housing sector in all phases of each project, from development to realization.

All projects awarded a grant under the A•C•T Program are documented as case studies in order to share information on the initiatives and the benefits of regulatory reform with other Canadian communities. Each case study discusses the regulatory reform initiative, its goals and the lessons learned. Where appropriate, the cost savings resulting from modifications in various planning, development and construction regulations are calculated and reported.

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

As Canada's population ages, it becomes increasingly important to ensure that the elderly have access to decent, affordable housing that meets their needs. In Quebec, as elsewhere in Canada, the growing number of seniors combined with a serious lack of housing has led to the proliferation of small, privately-run residences providing room and board to elderly persons. In many cases, these homes operate without a permit and therefore, without adequate regulatory control over the quality of the accommodation or services provided. Despite their deficiencies, however, small boarding houses (defined as those with fewer than ten rooms) represent an important housing resource. A recent provincial study found that there are as many seniors living in private establishments as there are in public ones. The challenge, then, is to ensure that this type of accommodation offers seniors a safe, secure and pleasant living environment.

In response to this situation, in December 1993, the City of Châteauguay amended its bylaw to ensure that homes providing room and board to more than two persons meet minimum standards of health and safety. Inspired by the Châteauguay example, the Regroupement des résidences pour retraités du Québec (RRRQ), a provincial organization of seniors' residences, undertook an A•C•T initiative to develop a set of regulatory tools intended for use by Quebec municipalities wishing to improve the quality of life in small boarding houses for elderly people.

This project involved the cooperation and participation of many of the key organizations involved in housing seniors:

- the City of Châteauguay;
- the Châteauguay *Centre local de services communautaires* (CLSC);
- the Quebec housing agency, the *Société d'habitation du Québec*; and
- the *Club de l'âge d'or de Châteauguay*.

The project team reviewed existing regulatory initiatives in Châteauguay as well as in Laval and Longueuil, which led to the identification of three useful approaches, particularly when used in concert, to improving living conditions in small boarding houses:

- a model bylaw that applies to boarding houses containing fewer than ten rooms for rent;
- a municipal registry of homes that comply with the bylaw; and
- the creation of an ongoing dialogue between the key players, such as the municipality and a CLSC.

This initiative will contribute to the adoption of more effective measures for ensuring minimum health and safety standards in privately run boarding houses for the elderly throughout Canada, thereby improving housing quality for those living in this type of accommodation. Furthermore, this A•C•T project, by encouraging boarding house owners to renovate and properly maintain their establishments, will help ensure the availability of this affordable housing choice for seniors.

1.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1.1 Small Private Boarding Houses: A Housing Choice for the Elderly

An aging population and a serious lack of housing resources for the elderly have led to the proliferation of small privately-run residences geared specifically to this segment of the population. By law, anyone wishing to operate a home for seniors must apply to the municipality for an operating permit. In reality, however, many of these homes are being run without a permit. In such cases, there is no regulatory control over the quality of the accommodation or the services provided to their elderly residents.

Despite their recognized deficiencies, however, small private boarding houses (defined as containing fewer than ten rooms) for the elderly represent an important housing resource. In fact, municipalities have been reluctant to regulate this type of accommodation because of the difficulties posed by relocating the residents should a boarding house be closed. The challenge is, then, to improve the quality of life afforded by these homes. Seniors have special housing needs. Some require quick and specialized medical care, others may need daily assistance, and all benefit from a healthy and varied diet. Above all, a safe, secure and pleasant built environment is the first step to improving living conditions.

1.2 A•C•T Project Objectives

In response to this state of affairs, in December 1993, the City of Châteauguay amended its bylaw to ensure that homes providing room and board to more than two persons meet minimum standards of health and safety. Inspired by the

Châteauguay example, the Regroupement des résidences pour retraités du Québec (RRRQ)¹, a provincial organization of seniors' residences, applied for and received an A•C•T grant in fall 1995 to recommend ways to change municipal regulations and approval processes to improve the quality of life in small boarding houses for elderly people.

Regroupement des résidences pour retraités du Québec

With 240 members representing over 15,500 rooms and apartments in Quebec, the RRRQ provides a voice for owner/operators of boarding houses, apartment houses, housing with services and nursing homes, as well as support service providers and home-service companies. It is a non-profit organization dedicated to better representing the interests of its members, retirees and the general public, and to achieving the following:

- evaluation and control of residences and their staff;
- research and documentation;
- provision of financial advantages for its members; and
- development of a network of residences and services for retirees.

Specifically, by drawing on regulatory precedents currently in place in some Quebec jurisdictions, the RRRQ undertook to draft a model bylaw that would regulate small privately-run boarding houses (with fewer than ten rooms for rent) in order to ensure that they meet minimum health and safety standards.

¹ In November 1998, the organization was renamed the *Association des résidences pour retraités du Québec*. For the purposes of this case study, the group's original name will be used. The organization's e-mail address is arr@arrq.org and its website is www.arrqu.org

1.3 Consultation and Cooperation

Representatives from the following organizations worked together with the RRRQ on the project team:

- the City of Châteauguay;
- the Châteauguay *Centre local de services communautaires* (CLSC);
- the provincial housing agency, the *Société d'habitation du Québec*; and
- the *Club de l'âge d'or de Châteauguay*².

The project team acted as an advisory group for the A•C•T initiative. Its role was to review and discuss documents prepared by the RRRQ at each stage of the project's development.

The municipalities of Montréal, Laval and Longueuil, all of which have adopted regulatory initiatives pertaining to small boarding houses, were also consulted on this A•C•T project.

“A unique opportunity for dialogue between the owners and managers of retirement homes and representatives from the municipalities, CLSCs, regional boards and seniors' associations.”

—RRRQ, Final Report for A•C•T Project.

On November 8, 1996, the RRRQ held its fourth annual conference, uniting key players to discuss the role of partnerships in the approval procedure for seniors' residences.

The partnerships established during the course of the A•C•T project laid the groundwork for collaboration and the exchange of information, on an ongoing basis, among the key players such as owners and managers of private residences, seniors, representatives of municipalities, CLSCs, associations for the elderly, and regional health and social services authorities.

1.4 Project Activities

The A•C•T grant was used to:

- analyze the housing needs of the elderly living in rooming houses;
- evaluate existing municipal regulations and approval procedures;
- analyze other relevant municipal regulatory initiatives;
- propose changes to regulations and approval processes;
- prepare a final report including proposed changes to regulations and approval processes; and
- promote the findings.

² In English, Châteauguay Golden Age Club

2.0 PROJECT RESULTS

2.1 Housing Needs of the Elderly

Seniors as a group require a range of housing options. For many, boarding houses provide an interesting alternative to living alone in a house or apartment, or in a large non-profit or for-profit retirement home. According to a 1994 inventory made by a local CLSC, there are currently more than one thousand commercial residences in Quebec which provide room and board to less than nine people. Boarding houses appeal to a variety of people. Some seniors can no longer live alone and require the services and security which many boarding houses offer. Others prefer not to live alone and seek the social contact found in boarding houses.

2.2 Regulatory Mechanisms Currently in Place

Currently, municipalities can take advantage of various regulatory tools to ensure that commercial residences for the elderly meet health, safety and maintenance standards. However, most of these tools apply to residences with ten or more units. These instruments (listed below) provided a useful starting point for the development of a municipal bylaw pertaining to seniors' residences with fewer than 10 units.

The provincial *Loi sur les cités et villes*³, Chapter C-19, grants municipalities the right to regulate small boarding houses. Specifically, it empowers municipalities to enact bylaws relating to the transformation, maintenance and quality of rooms for rent and of other income properties.

The *National Building Code* (NBC) establishes standards according to building use, construction date, change of use and type of clientele.

The *National Fire Code* requires that a municipality be advised of the existence of a residence for elderly persons for inclusion in its fire security plan.

The provincial building commission, the *Régie du bâtiment*, can inspect a residence following a special request or complaint.

The provincial rental commission, the *Régie de logement*, has jurisdiction over rooming houses with two or more rooms for rent.

The *Quebec Ministry of Health and Social Services* regulates building use when a permit is required to accommodate individuals who are not independent.

2.2.1 Obstacles in the Existing Regulatory Environment

Following an evaluation of existing municipal regulations and approval procedures in several Quebec jurisdictions, the project team identified four important regulatory barriers to improving health and safety standards in small, privately run boarding houses for the elderly.

Barrier One: A lack of regulation for this type of residence.

The majority of Quebec's 1,400 municipalities lack specific zoning and housing standards for boarding houses containing fewer than 10 units. In effect, these residences can operate without a permit or certificate of compliance.

³ In English, the Cities and Towns Act.

Barrier Two: An absence of direction from the Quebec Ministry of Municipal Affairs.

Many Quebec municipalities believe that they are not responsible for, or empowered to, ensure adequate health and safety standards in boarding houses with less than ten rooms. In fact, the provincial *Loi sur les cités et villes* gives municipalities the power to regulate in this area. However, very few municipalities have adopted such bylaws due to, among other things, a lack of direction and encouragement from the Province.

Barrier Three: A lack of communication and links between municipalities, the healthcare system (CLSCs, health and social services authorities) and private residences for seniors.

On the one hand, municipal employees feel powerless to meet the needs of elderly residents requiring a higher level of services. On the other hand, professionals working in the field, such as CLSC workers, do not feel that they are authorized to intervene in smaller privately-run homes as they do in conventional residences for the elderly.

Barrier Four: An absence of political will.

In addition to the lack of direction or strong interest from the provincial government, elected municipal officials have yet to make this issue a priority.

2.3 Case Studies of Existing Municipal Regulatory Tools

Following a review of relevant municipal initiatives currently in place, the project team found that Châteauguay, Longueuil and Laval each have bylaws that apply specifically to residences for the elderly.

2.3.1 Châteauguay

In 1993, Châteauguay approved a bylaw amendment (G-1099) regarding boarding houses in order to ensure that residences for the elderly meet health and safety standards. The bylaw applies to buildings containing more than two rooms and offering meals. The City reinforced the bylaw with a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the municipality and the CLSC. By clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of the two parties, the agreement put an end to the murky situation in which the parties found themselves, in which the municipality felt that it was not qualified to determine whether an elderly person is independent and whether he/she is receiving the appropriate services, while the CLSC felt that it had no power to improve the condition of boarding houses.

In Châteauguay today, it is the responsibility of the building owner/manager to obtain an operating permit. If a municipal inspector requires that the owner/manager make alterations, a renovation permit must also be obtained. When a building is discovered to be operating without a permit, the municipality informs the owner/manager, and advises him/her of the regulations and procedures in force and of his obligation to comply with these within a given time. In serious cases, the Mayor can order a residence closed. Once approved, residences are listed in a municipal registry.

Since the bylaw was adopted, 20 of the City's 45 residences with nine rooms or fewer have been brought into conformance with the bylaw.

2.3.2 Longueuil

Since 1995, representatives of CLSCs, the regional Health and Social Services Authority, hospitals, community organizations and the City

of Longueuil have worked together in order to improve coordination and communication among the different players and to develop mechanisms to improve the quality of life for the elderly living in small privately run residences. To accomplish the former, the key players also signed an MOU. To accomplish the latter, the City made changes to its zoning bylaw and building code.

Since the zoning bylaw was modified in September 1996, two of 41 residences have been closed and the remaining 39 have been formally listed in a municipal registry.

2.3.3 Laval

In 1972, the City of Laval adopted bylaw L-548 concerning safety, well-being and health in public buildings open to people requiring assistance, such as the elderly. Notably, this bylaw expands the definition of “public building” found in the Public Buildings Safety Act⁴ to include establishments that house adults requiring assistance. In particular, it is aimed at rooming houses accommodating, on a full-time permanent basis, three or more adults requiring lodging, physical assistance and protection, or medical supervision.

Those wishing to operate such a home must apply for an operating permit from the municipal Welfare Department⁵, which is responsible for coordinating approval from other relevant government agencies, such as the planning and fire departments. Before a permit is issued, an employee from the Welfare Department visits

the establishment and provides the owner with an information guide. The Service can also make unannounced visits. All permit applications must be accompanied by building plans, an evacuation plan and procedure, and a list of personnel. The permit must be renewed annually. Each time a permit is renewed, the premises are inspected by each of the relevant departments.

2.4 Proposed Changes to Regulations and Regulatory Processes

Following an in-depth analysis of the regulatory examples described above, the project team proposed three tools that municipalities can use to ensure that small, private residences for the elderly meet minimum health and safety standards. These are:

- a model municipal bylaw to ensure municipal control over housing quality;
- an ongoing dialogue between the participating parties, such as the municipality and local CLSC; and
- a municipal registry of approved residences.

2.4.1 The Model Bylaw

The A•C•T project resulted in a model bylaw that is intended to serve as a guideline for municipalities wishing to improve living conditions in small boarding houses for the elderly. Each individual municipality would modify the model bylaw to reflect its own regulatory objectives and environment. The model bylaw proposes minimum health and safety standards for buildings containing more than two (2) and fewer than ten (10) rooms to rent, and offering board. The bylaw includes as appendices the 1990 NBC of Canada (amended in 1992), the 1990 National Fire Prevention

⁴ In French, the *Loi sur la sécurité dans les édifices publics*

⁵ In French, the *Service de Bien-être social*

Code of Canada (amended in 1993) and the 1992 Electrical Code of Quebec. Appendix A contains the model bylaw.

The RRRQ recommends that several elements be included in such a bylaw. For example, the bylaw should:

- contain provisions concerning the health and safety of the premises;
- in conformance with the NBC, propose minimum standards in order to meet the needs of a growing aging population;
- recognize various types of seniors' residences according to the degree of autonomy of the residents (i.e., nursing homes and boarding homes) in order to ensure residents' health and safety without incurring high renovation costs.

The model is intended to serve as a guideline for municipalities wishing to improve living conditions in small boarding houses for the elderly. Each individual municipality would modify the model bylaw to reflect its own regulatory objectives and situation.

The bylaw also lays out the approval process for a permit to operate such a residence.

The property owner or his/her proxy would apply to the municipality for an operating permit. Among other things, the application form must indicate the principal uses of the building and contain the information necessary for the municipality to evaluate whether the building is in conformance with the bylaw and the NBC. The permit would be valid for a year. In order to renew a permit, the property would have to pass an inspection by the municipality.

2.4.2 *An Ongoing Dialogue between Key Players*

The involvement of various parties such as the municipality, CLSCs, seniors' associations, boarding house owners and managers, and their associations is integral to ensuring that small rooming houses meet minimum levels of health and safety. For this reason, the project team believed it was necessary to enter into some kind of agreement between the parties in question. Because municipalities can only enter into a legally binding contract, such as a MOU, for municipal purposes, the project team decided to address this situation by creating an ongoing dialogue, into which the relevant parties would join on a voluntary basis.

The foundation for a successful working relationship is a clear definition of the roles and responsibilities of each of the partners in ensuring a satisfactory quality of life for the elderly living in private residences. Specifically, the project team suggests that:

The *municipality* will

- verify whether a building conforms to the municipal health and safety bylaw;
- issue the appropriate permit and/or certificate;
- maintain a registry of residences that are in conformance with the bylaw; and
- deal with complaints.

CLSCs will

- evaluate an elderly person's housing needs and the level of services required;
- provide information; and
- refer the elderly person to the appropriate services.

Seniors' associations will

- assess residents' quality of life;
- participate in friendship visits; and
- explain to members the procedure for choosing a place to live.

Owners and managers will

- undertake to respect the bylaw and to maintain an appropriate living environment.

Old-age homes associations will

- accept applications from private residences that meet the standards laid out in the bylaw;
- offer training programs for staff members of boarding houses for the elderly; and
- handle complaints concerning residences.

2.4.3 **Municipal Registry**

The adoption of such a bylaw would facilitate the establishment of a municipal registry of private residences that meet municipal health and safety standards as set out in the bylaw. The registry would contain boarding houses with fewer than ten rooms for rent as well as larger residences. A registry would motivate owners to apply for an operating permit or a certificate of compliance by offering them several advantages, such as free publicity, and a referral system to attract clientele.

“People have very few means for finding out whether one residence or another can adequately meet the needs of a specific elderly person. How do we know if a residence has been the subject of complaints? What means are available to ensure that the improvements will be made or even, in extreme cases, that the residence will be closed?”

—Robert Chagnon, “The evaluation of private residences, it’s urgent!”, **Habitabec**, Montréal, June 25, 1993, p. 20

2.4.4 **Other Recommendations**

Important to the success of this initiative is the dissemination of information to the parties concerned and the development of training programs for municipal employees.

The project team recommends that interested municipalities prepare the following information tools:

- a series of information brochures aimed at different groups;
- a guide for seniors to help them choose a place to live;
- a guide for boarding house owners/managers describing the procedure for obtaining a permit as well as the advantages of listing their homes with the municipal registry.

Also useful would be training sessions to inform municipal employees about seniors' needs, particularly those seniors with limited autonomy requiring a home with a higher level of services. The sessions would be aimed at those working in permit, fire and planning departments.

2.5 **Promoting the Model Bylaw**

An information package containing a summary of the project's recommendations was sent to 74 Quebec municipalities with 3,000 or more inhabitants.

The model bylaw has been promoted at workshops held at the RRRQ's annual conference. In 1996, the cities of Châteauguay and Longueuil participated in the presentation, and in 1998, the City of St-Eustache shared its experiences. The model bylaw will continue to be promoted by the Union of Quebec Municipalities, Quebec Union of Regional Municipalities and their members.

3.0 REGULATORY REFORM INITIATIVES AND IMPACT ON AFFORDABILITY, CHOICE AND QUALITY

Since the A•C•T initiative undertaken by the RRRQ was completed in fall 1998, several Quebec municipalities, including Granby, St-Hubert and Charlesbourg, have adopted bylaws according to the RRRQ guidelines, and others, such as St-Jean-sur-Richelieu and Dunham, are reviewing their bylaws.

“In this context, the study you are proposing, as well as its dissemination, will be able to contribute significantly to the adoption of more adequate measures applicable to the buildings that house this population everywhere in Canada, and in this sense, we concur wholeheartedly.”

—Gabriel Deschambault, Superintendent Technical and Heritage Expertise⁶, City of Montréal.
In letter to Mr. Robert Chagnon dated November 30, 1995.

The availability of the regulatory tools—the model bylaw and municipal registry—developed as a result of this initiative can serve as a guide to Canadian municipalities interested in ensuring minimum health and safety standards in small, privately-run rooming houses for the elderly, thereby improving housing quality for those living in this type of accommodation.

This A•C•T project, by encouraging boarding house owners to renovate and properly maintain their establishments, will help ensure the availability of this affordable housing choice for seniors. Furthermore, the municipal registry will help seniors choose accommodation that better meets their needs.

Partnership and cooperation between key players was crucial to the success of this project and will continue to be important because an agreement on the roles and responsibilities of the various partners is non-binding and will, therefore, depend on voluntary support.

The results of this A•C•T streamlined approval process project are transferable to municipalities throughout Quebec as well as other parts of Canada.

⁶ In French, *Expertise technique et patrimoine*

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A: THE MODEL BYLAW

4. MODEL MUNICIPAL BYLAW

This text proposes the content for a model bylaw that a municipality can pass. The proposal is based on the analysis of current bylaws. The notes written in italics are provided as references with a view to facilitating the writing of a text adapted to the environment, in conjunction with existing bylaws.

1. Definition

- a) Boarding House:
A family home with more than two (2) and less than nine (9) rooms for rent and offering meals.
- b) Contract:
A lease used to establish the rights and obligations of residents and owners.

2. Appended Documents

Are an integral part of this bylaw, for all legal purposes:

- a) The National Building Code of Canada, 1990, amended in September 1992, as well as all its future amendments.
- b) The National Fire Code of Canada, 1990, amended in January 1993, as well as all its future amendments.
- c) The Quebec electrical code 1992, including the Canadian Electrical Code, Part 1, as well as the modifications to the Canadian Electrical Code applicable to Quebec, and all their future amendments.
- d) The *Tourist Establishments Act*² (R.S.Q. Chapter E-15.1) amending the Tourist Establishments Act.

These documents are appended to this chapter after having been certified true and signed by the Mayor and the Clerk.

3. Application for Permit

All applications for permits or certificates must be submitted to the municipal department (*designated by the municipality*).

Procedures (see the toolbox for standardizing procedures).

4. Accommodation Guidelines Pertaining to Health

The owner of a boarding house must ensure that all of the following standards are met.

- a) Room layout
Have a usable floor space of at least 7 m² (*NBC 90, Section 9.5.6.1.1*). This usable floor space (7 m²) applies if the boarding house has at least one habitable common room such as a kitchen or a family room.
- b) Room height
The height of the rooms, measured from the floor to ceiling, must be at least 2.10 m (6 ft 11 in.).
- c) Room layout (private space)
Have a chest of drawers, a chair and/or armchair, a lamp that works and adequate cabinet space (*RET² 57.3, 4, 5, 6 and 44.3, 4, 5, 5*). Include a bed with a mattress covered by a mattress pad and a pillow covered by a pillow slip (*RET 57.2 and 44.2*).

Be equipped with a lock and be lockable from the inside of the room (*RET 60*).

² *Règlement sur les établissements touristiques* ("Tourist Establishment Regulation" [transl.])

- d) Natural lighting
Be equipped with a window allowing in daylight, directly or through an atrium (*RET 36.2*).
- e) Bathrooms and toilets
Have a bathroom containing a toilet, sink and a bath or shower accessible to the resident (*RET 59*) and must be supplied with toilet paper and soap.
- f) Common areas
Dayroom lounge, dining room and kitchen
- g) Laundry (laundry room)
Each boarding unit must make available to the residents a laundry room with all the equipment required, or offer a laundry service.
- h) Room ventilation *NBC standards*
- i) Plumbing and sanitary facilities *NBC standards*
- j) Heating
Must be heated and maintained at a comfortable temperature (minimum temperature of 20°C).
- k) Electrical installation *NBC and the Régie du bâtiment [provincial building commission] standards.*
- l) Waste storage *Municipal bylaws.*

5. Layout standards pertaining to the safety of the premises and in the event of fire

The owner of a boarding house must keep the premises clean and safe, he or she must, among others:

- Ensure at all times, the presence on the premises of a responsible adult, other than a boarder, capable of taking action when necessary.
 - Keep a first aid kit available at all times (*RET 35*).
 - Ensure that a telephone is accessible to the residents at all times, as well as emergency telephone numbers.
 - Ensure that mobility is not hindered by the presence of carpets in the rooms or elsewhere in the house (carpets should be prohibited).
- a) Railings
Have handrails in the corridors and stairways, equip the bathrooms with suitable equipment: support bars, bath seat, telephone shower, etc. Ensure the cleanliness of this equipment.
 - b) Building access control
Make the interior and exterior premises accessible to clientele.
 - c) Emergency exit (means of evacuation)
The width of the doors used as exits must be at least 900 mm (2 ft 11 in.) (*NBC 90, Section 9.9.3.2*).

- d) Dimensions and clearance for exit passages
Width of the corridors or passages to the exit must be at least 1100 mm (3 ft 7 in.) (*NBC 90, Section 9.9.3.3*).

There must be at least two (2) exits for each floor area and they must be independent and as far away from each other as possible (*NBC 90, Section 9.9.7.1*).

- e) Fire protection for exit passages *NBC standards*.
- f) Firewall *NBC standards*.
- g) Wall and ceiling coverings *NBC standards*.
- h) Lighting, signage

Security lighting must be present at all times at the exits, in the main access routes to the exits and in the common corridors. Must be independent and compliant. (*CSA Standard C.22.2, No. 141-M*) (independent security lighting units) (*NBC 90, Section 9.9.11.3*).

Except for the main entrance door, the exit doors of the building must be indicated by a sign placed above or beside them (*NBC 90, Section 9.9.10.6*) and they must be easily accessible.

If more than nine (9) persons are lodged in the same boarding house, the doors used as exits (except for the main entrance door) must open to the outside with a panic bar (*NBC 90, Section 9.9.6.5.2*).

- i) Smoke detector
A certified smoke detector (*CAN/ULC standard C531-M*) must be installed in each room and on each floor.

Every building that lodges people must have a 10 lb. ABC fire extinguisher and an NFPA 10 water extinguisher.

If more than nine (9) people are lodged in the same boarding house, a fire detection and alarm system must be provided (*NBC 90, Table 9.10.17.A*)

- j) Alarm system *NBC standards*.
- k) Extinguisher *NBC standards*.

6. Compliance and non-compliance with standards

Visit by a municipal inspector to verify the building's conformance and the cleanliness of the premises pursuant to municipal bylaws.

In the event of complaints, issuance of a compliance report containing the list of the work to be performed and the time frame allowed for completing them.

Penalties

As a guide, if the work is not performed subsequent to receiving the compliance report, the owner of the residence is liable to a fine ranging from \$150 to \$1,000. Each day of delay in rectifying the situation can constitute a separate violation. The municipality has the power to have the proposed work performed at the owner's expense.