

House Bill 1218 Rule Updates: Nursing Home Q&A Session September 16, 2025 Residential Care Services

Question #1	What is the definition of “timely” (in reference to WAC 388-97-0180)?
Answer #1	“Timely” is not defined in the rule.
Question #2	Is there a requirement for the number of phones that that need to be available to residents on the unit? Or the location they need to be accessible?
Answer #2	The rule does not require a specific number of phones or location. WAC 388-97-2300 . However, see RCW 18.51.575 (2) Each nursing home must have...” a sufficient quantity of working telephones...to ensure that residents have 24-hour access to communications with family, medical providers, and others...must provide for auditory privacy, not be located in a staff office or station, be accessible and usable by persons with hearing loss and other disabilities, and not require payment for local calls. A nursing home is not required to provide telephones at no cost in each resident room.”
Question #3	Can the phone be at the nursing station if it is portable and can be taken to a room if privacy wanted?
Answer #4	WAC 388-97-2300 requires the phone location allow for 24-hour access, auditory privacy, and other requirements. See also RCW 18.51.575 (2), which states “telephones... not be located in a staff office or station...”
Question #5	Can a resident have a 2nd essential person?
Answer #5	“Essential Support Person” is defined as an “individual”. WAC 388-97-0001 . A person may change their essential support person if they choose to.
Question #6	Do we need to document in the medical record who the support person is?

Answer #6	The rules do not specify where to document the essential support person.
Question #7	Can you provide the crosswalk from WAC to Nursing Home Ftag for phone and electronic communication requirements?
Answer #8	<p>388-97-2300 F576 / 483.10(g)(6)-(9), Right to Forms of Communication with Privacy</p> <p>Telephones on resident care units. ---</p> <p>The nursing home must provide twenty-four hour access to a telephone for resident use which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Provides auditory privacy; (2) Is accessible to a person with a disability and accommodates a person with sensory impairment; (3) Is not located in a staff office or at a nurse's station; and (4) Does not require payment for local calls.
Question #8	Are we required as a facility to provide any form of training to the designated support person? Especially for residents with advanced dementia/ expressing behaviors or residents who are reaching end of life?
Answer #8	<p>The essential support person is a visitor whose presence will prevent or reduce emotional distress to the resident during specific circumstances. The rules do not require training for the essential support person. WAC 388-97-0001. WAC 388-76-0520. RCW 70.129.190.</p>