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Governor



Thomas A. Maul
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STATE OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF MENTAL RETARDATION AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
44 HOLLAND AVENUE
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DIVISION OF QUALITY ASSURANCE

TO: All Survey Staff

FROM: Jan Abelseth, 
Deputy Commissioner
Division of Quality Assurance

SUBJECT: ADM 99-01 - Ceiling Fans/Smoke Detectors

DATE: July 7, 1999

There has been a change in our policy regarding the issue of smoke detectors being located too near ceiling fans. HCFA will no longer accept the tests that we have allowed for a number of years. Given this, and after consultation with HCFA and the Department of State, the attached will be the new policy for allowing ceiling fans near smoke detectors in any of our certified facilities.

MS/JA
Attachment



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**DIVISION OF QUALITY ASSURANCE
ADMINISTRATIVE MEMORANDUM NO. 99-01**

**TO: Executive Directors, Voluntary Agencies
DDSO Directors**

**FROM: Jan Abelseth, 
Deputy Commissioner
Division of Quality Assurance**

SUBJECT: Smoke Detectors Near Ceiling Fans

DATE: July 14, 1999

The purpose of this memo is to provide guidance to agencies regarding a potential problem with ceiling fans located in rooms with smoke detectors. OMRDD has consulted with both HCFA and the New York Department of State. The following revised procedures should be implemented immediately:

If there is no ceiling fan in the room and the agency wishes to install one:

- The detector must be located a minimum of three (3) feet from the edge of the ceiling fan blade, measured horizontally.
- In accordance with the National Fire Code (NFPA 72), any smoke detector in a room with a ceiling fan should be a photoelectric type and not an ionization type (unless the detector type has been specifically listed for conditions of rapid air movement; i.e. greater than 300 feet per minute).

If there currently is a ceiling fan in the room, and it is less than three feet from the smoke detector:

- Option A- move either the fan or the detector to a distance greater than three feet and ensure the detector is of the photoelectric type (or appropriately listed).



- **Option B-** In general, smoke detection systems are engineered systems and must be designed for the needs and specific environmental conditions of each house. Therefore, the agency must perform smoke tests as determined by a licensed professional engineer to determine that the operation of the ceiling fan (in both directions and at different speeds) will not create more than a 20 second delay in the activation of the detector (beyond the detector response time absent the fan).
- If the tests indicate a detector response time delay greater than 20 seconds, a second smoke detector must be installed in the room at a distance greater than three feet from the fan blade. Such detector must be a photoelectric type.

If there is currently a ceiling fan more than three feet from a smoke detector:

- Verify that the detector is a photoelectric type (or as appropriately listed). If not, it should be replaced.

If there are any questions, please contact Joel Altschul at (518) 473-7032.