

Fact Sheet #2: What are “Group Homes”

Understanding Licensing, Oversight, and How to Report Concerns

“Group home” is a generic term used to describe community-based residences where vulnerable adults or children live together with shift staff providing care and supervision tailored to individual support needs. These homes often serve individuals with disabilities and seniors with complex behavioral and/or medical needs. They are operated by licensed service providers under state oversight.

Types of Group Homes in Minnesota:

1. Community Residential Settings (CRS) & Child Foster Residential Settings (CFRS)

- CRSs serve adults with disabilities and CFRSs serve children with disabilities, including medical and behavioral support needs.
- Licensed by the **Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS)** in accordance with **Minnesota Statutes 245A and 245D and Minnesota Rules 9555 and 2960**
- DHS licenses most of the services, county licenses the physical building.
- Typically serve 4 or fewer residents.

2. Assisted Living Facilities (AL)

- Licensed by the **Minnesota Department of Health (MDH)** under **Minnesota Statute 144G**.
- Able to serve seniors, including those needing dementia care, or younger adults with disabilities.
- The same license type can look very different. Some serve a few people in a single family home. Others are large apartment buildings with communal activities.

3. Board & Lodge with Special Services

- MDH requires providers register the sites as per **Minnesota Statutes 157.17**
- Shared housing for up to 6 adults looking to get back on their feet with limited provider supports.

4. Other Residential Settings

- Dakota County also has mental health treatment programs for adults, substance use disorder treatment programs, and a children’s residential program.
- All are licensed directly by **DHS**.

What About City Rules and Oversight?

State law (**Minn. Stat. 462.357**) ensures that zoning laws **cannot discriminate** against group homes or individuals with disabilities. Cities can regulate things like:

- **Occupancy limits** - typically no more than six unrelated people living in one unit
- **Noise, parking, and property maintenance** - the same zoning rules apply
- **State Fire Marshals & Local Building Inspectors** – conduct inspections for safety or licensing and may issue rental or occupancy certificates
- **Local First Responders** - emergency services respond to emergency calls

If You Have a Concern:

- **Step 1: Talk to the Provider**
 - Speak with the **on-site staff** if it's a minor concern (e.g. parking, noise)
 - Don't approach neighbors during a crisis or when emotions are high
 - For unresolved concerns, **ask for a supervisor or program manager**

- **Step 2: Contact the Right Agency**

All reports are assessed and may be **cross-reported** to multiple agencies depending on the concern.

- **MAARC (Minnesota Adult Abuse Reporting Center)**
 - 1-844-880-1574 – for suspected abuse or neglect of vulnerable adults
- **Dakota County Child Protection**
 - 952-891-7459 – for suspected maltreatment in homes serving children
- **Dakota County Adult Foster Care Licensing**
 - 651-554-6000 – to help answer questions and provide guidance
- **DHS Licensing Division**
 - 651-431-6600 – to take complaints on facilities and answer questions
 - [DHS Licensing Lookup](#) – to check compliance records or get a phone number
- **MDH Assisted Living Licensure**
 - 651-201-4200 | health.assistedliving@state.mn.us
 - [Health Care Provider Directory](#) – to check compliance or get a phone number
- **Your local city/municipality** – For zoning, nuisance, or local ordinance issues