



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

Office of Construction &  
Facilities Management

Office of Facilities Planning  
Facilities Standards Service

# DESIGN ALERT

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## VA Standards Application and User Design Input Requirements

**ISSUE:** There have been reports that clinicians, users and stakeholders have not been included to provide critical input in the design process, and VA Planning, Design, and Construction Standards have not been consistently applied as a basis of planning and design to VA projects, resulting in partial or complete functional and operational failures of completed and/or recently activated projects.

**BACKGROUND:** VA Program Offices, project teams, designers and constructors, are obligated to our Nation's Veterans and taxpayers to make the most effective and efficient use of resources, by providing a continuum of safe, secure, high quality, high performance, and high value environments of care and service for Veterans. The Office of Construction & Facilities Management (CFM) supports the Department's mission through development and application of standards as a basis for disciplined planning, design, and construction of VA facilities.

**DISCUSSION:** Following VA Technical information Library (TIL) Standards (<https://www.cfm.va.gov/TIL>) and active participation of facility user/stakeholder groups in the application of Standards for all projects will ensure VA provides optimally functional, high quality, high performance, and flexible facilities within scope, on budget, and on time in accomplishment of VA's missions.

**REQUIREMENT:** In all phases of Planning, Design, and Construction, for all VA projects it is required:

- 1) All applicable VA Standards published in the VA Technical Information Library (TIL) (<https://www.cfm.va.gov/TIL>) shall be applied as a basis, foundation, and framework in planning, design, and construction. Any substantial variance from Standards shall be considered only as required to accommodate specific site, functional, and operational conditions. Upon consideration of variance CFM shall be consulted, and each Administration will function as Authority Having Jurisdiction for decision. Each substantial variance shall have a basis rationale and be documented in the project record;

- 2) Clinicians, providers, primary users, and other stakeholders shall be involved in all phases of project development to best adapt Standards for specific functional, operational, and site conditions, and to provide optimum service environments for Veterans. This also includes installations and modifications of systems or technology involving safety, security, functionality, or environmental quality. Stakeholder involvement shall be documented in the project record.

All parties in the planning, design, and construction process must embrace these requirements as fundamental in providing optimum environments for Veterans' care and services, in fulfilling VA's mission.

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