

Group Homes in Richmond



What is a group home?

A group home is a principal dwelling used to provide temporary or permanent residential care for a group of people unrelated by blood or marriage. Group homes offer important services by providing their residents with short and long-term living arrangements, affordable and safe housing, skills training, peer support, counseling and other services. They make it possible for people in care or recovery to live independently within their community. Continuing the tradition of inclusiveness and supporting those with care needs within the community, group homes have

been successfully integrated into Richmond neighbourhoods.

Group homes are generally operated by non-profit societies and house from three to ten residents, although most accommodate from four to six (not including employees or resident caregivers). Group homes are permitted in all areas zoned for residential use and operate in a range of dwellings, including single family homes, townhouses and apartments. In the City's Zoning Bylaw, a group home is classified as a "community care facility, minor".

Who do group homes serve?

Group homes provide residential and support services to three or more adults (19 years of age and older) who are vulnerable because of age, disability, illness or frailty and are dependent on caregivers for continuing assistance or recovery. Group homes serve people with a variety of needs, including those requiring care, supervision, education and training, and physical or mental rehabilitative therapy.

Those caring for one or two unrelated adults are considered households, rather than group homes, in the City's Zoning Bylaw.

Who licenses, funds and monitors group homes?

A group home may or may not be licensed under the Provincial Community Care and Assisted Living Act, depending on the number and type of "prescribed services" offered to residents, as defined by the BC Ministry of Health (MOH). For a description of prescribed services, please visit the MOH website (see Contact Information, below).



- Group homes (3–10 residents) providing **one or two** MOH-prescribed services are designated “assisted living” residences and must register with and uphold the standards of the Ministry of Health’s Assisted Living Registry (MOH-ALR).
- Group homes (3–10 residents) providing **three or more** MOH-prescribed services are licensed through Vancouver Coastal Health Community Care Facilities Licensing (VCH-CCFL).
- Group homes (3–10 residents) providing **one or more** MOH-prescribed services but not registered or licensed are deemed “Operating Without a License” and will be investigated by the VCH Patient Care Quality Office.
- Care homes (1 or 2 residents only) providing **one or more** MOH-prescribed services are not considered group homes for City purposes, and neither Assisted Living Registration nor Community Care Facilities Licensing is required. Service standards are governed by contractual agreements with health authorities or other sponsoring organizations (e.g. Community Living BC).

Funding for licensed and assisted living group homes is typically provided through health authorities or senior governments (e.g. Community Living BC, Ministry of Health), referred to as sponsors. The sponsoring organization establishes operating expectations for the facility, identifies selection criteria for residents and works with VCH-CCFL or MOH-ALR to ensure that requirements are met.

Once a licensed group home is established, VCH-CCFL conducts routine monitoring and inspections to ensure compliance with the Community Care and Assisted Living Act and Residential Care Regulation requirements. VCH-CCFL will also investigate complaints about licensed facilities; MOH-ALR staff will investigate complaints about assisted living residences. For further information about licensing and assisted living registration, please contact VCH-CCFL or the Assisted Living Registry (see p. 11).

What are the City’s requirements for group homes?

City requirements for group homes are based on three categories (see p. 5). Most group homes fall in the first category, for three to six residents.

1. For 3–6 residents: Assisted Living or Licensed Group Homes
2. For 7–10 residents: Assisted Living Group Homes
3. For 7–10 residents: Licensed Group Homes



City approvals for group homes pertain to building, plumbing, fire, zoning and location requirements. For those serving 7–10 residents, the City also requires neighbourhood notification and procedures. Business licenses are required for commercial (for profit) operations (see “City Procedures for Establishing a Group home”, p. 7).

Key criteria for City support of group homes includes:

- Meeting building, plumbing, fire, zoning and location requirements;
- For 7–10 residents, locating at least 200 metres from other group homes for 7–10 residents;
- For 7–10 residents, implementing a neighbourhood communication and consultation process;
- Following “good neighbour” practices, outlined below.

What are “good neighbour” practices?

The City encourages group homes to follow “good neighbour” practices, whereby the operator:

- Has ongoing contact with the neighbourhood (see “City Requirements for Group Homes”, p. 5) to ensure that any issues are immediately addressed;
- Addresses concerns in a productive and problem-solving manner, provides contacts as required to address potential problems or issues;

- Maintains and renovates the home according to neighbourhood standards, while minimizing disruption to the neighbourhood;
- Encourages residents to become part of the neighbourhood.

For Further Information

For further information about establishing a licensed group home, please call VCH-CCFL at 604-233-3147 or, to establish an Assisted Living Residence, please call MOH-ALR at 1-866-714-3378. For further information about City requirements, please call the City of Richmond at 604-276-4000 (see p. 11).

Although every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this document at the time of publication, please confirm information with VCH-CCFL, the Assisted Living Registry and the City of Richmond before making any decisions regarding the establishment of group homes in the city.



City Requirements for Group Homes

Group Home Type	Fire & Building Safety	Zoning	Neighbourhood Notification/Information
<p>1. For 3–6 residents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registered Assisted Living Residence (1 or 2 MOH prescribed services); or Licensed Minor Community Care Facility (3 or more MOH prescribed services) 	<p>Proposed building must meet City building, plumbing and fire safety requirements for single family homes, and must also contain a sprinkler system, emergency lighting, and fire separation at the garage.</p>	<p>Community Care Facility, Minor Household, including up to 6 unrelated residents Permitted in all districts zoned for residential use</p>	<p>Not required</p>
<p>2. For 7–10 residents:</p> <p>a) MOH Registered Assisted Living Residence (1 or 2 MOH prescribed services)</p>	<p>Proposed building must meet City building, plumbing and fire safety requirements for single family homes, and must also contain a sprinkler system, emergency lighting, and fire separation at the garage. Please note that VCH-Health Protection requires a Food Permit with kitchen design requirements.</p>	<p>Community Care Facility, Minor Permitted in all districts zoned for residential use, provided building is a minimum of 200 metres, (lot to lot) from another group home for 7–10 residents.</p>	<p>Upon the City receiving an application for a MOH Assisted Living Residence (7–10 residents) the City will write to neighbours within a five-house radius of the proposed home to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite them to an informal meeting, hosted by the City in conjunction with the operator, to provide information and to solicit comments on the facility; Provide them with contact information for a designated member of the facility operating team, a “fact sheet” about the facility, and the “Group Homes in Richmond” booklet. <p>Results of the neighbourhood consultation are shared with Richmond City Council and the MOH Assisted Living Registry for appropriate action. Follow-up is conducted by the MOH Assisted Living Registry.</p>

Group Home Type	Fire & Building Safety	Zoning	Neighbourhood Notification/Information
<p>b) VCH-CCF Licensed Minor Community Care Facility (3 or more MOH prescribed services)</p>	<p>Proposed building must meet City building, plumbing and fire safety requirements for single family homes, and must also contain a sprinkler system, emergency lighting, and fire separation at the garage.</p> <p>Please note that VCH-Health Protection requires a Food Permit with kitchen design requirements.</p>	<p>Community Care Facility, Minor</p> <p>Permitted in all districts zoned for residential use, provided building is a minimum of 200 metres, (lot to lot) from another group home for 7–10 residents.</p>	<p>1. Upon notification by VCH-Richmond that an application for a licensed group home (7–10 residents) has been received, the City will write to neighbours within a 50 metre or five-house radius of the proposed home, whichever is greater, to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite them to an informal meeting, hosted by the City in conjunction with VCH-Richmond and the operator, to provide information and receive comments about the proposed home; • Invite owners to submit comments directly to the City; • Provide them with contact information for a designated member of the group home operating team, a “fact sheet” about the home, and the “Group Homes in Richmond” booklet. <p>2. The City will provide comments on the application to VCH-Richmond for information and consideration.</p> <p>3. VCH-Richmond, at its discretion, may issue a Community Care Facility (CCF) License for the facility.</p> <p>4. Nine months after the CCF License is issued:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City will write to neighbours within a five-house radius of the facility seeking comments and host an additional information meeting for the neighbours, if required; • The City will convey comments to VCH-Richmond for information and consideration.

MOH = BC Ministry of Health
VCH-CCF = Vancouver Coastal Health Community Care Facilities

City Procedures for Establishing a Group Home

1. Inquiry Received at City Hall

Prospective facility operators whose first point of contact is the City will be advised to consult with Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) Community Care Facilities Licensing (CCFL) for information and advice about VCH Licensing requirements, or the Ministry of Health (MOH) for information about the Assisted Living Registry (ALR), before taking further steps.



2. Preliminary Operator Considerations

The prospective operator will discuss the type and level of care and clientele, as well as the number of residents to be served (three to ten residents per dwelling) with VCH-CCFL or MOH-ALR staff.

Based on this information, VCH or MOH staff will advise:

- If a CCF License or MOH Assisted Living Registration is required, based on the number of MOH prescribed services offered;
- To consult with appropriate government agencies to determine the need for service as well as capital/operating funding considerations;
- To contact City Customer Service staff to determine if the location is appropriately zoned (permitted in all residential zones), and for information about City building and fire safety requirements, as well as approval procedures;
- That group homes for 7–10 residents must be located at least 200 metres from other group homes for 7–10 residents (licensed or registered).

Prospective applicants are strongly advised to consult with VCH-CCFL or MOH-ALR staff PRIOR to the purchase of property, new construction or renovation of existing buildings.

3. License/ Registration Application

MOH-ALR: Registration Required (one or two MOH prescribed services offered):

- The prospective operator will apply to the Assisted Living Registry for registration and must meet facility, operational and administrative standards.

VCH-CCF: License Required (three or more MOH prescribed services offered):

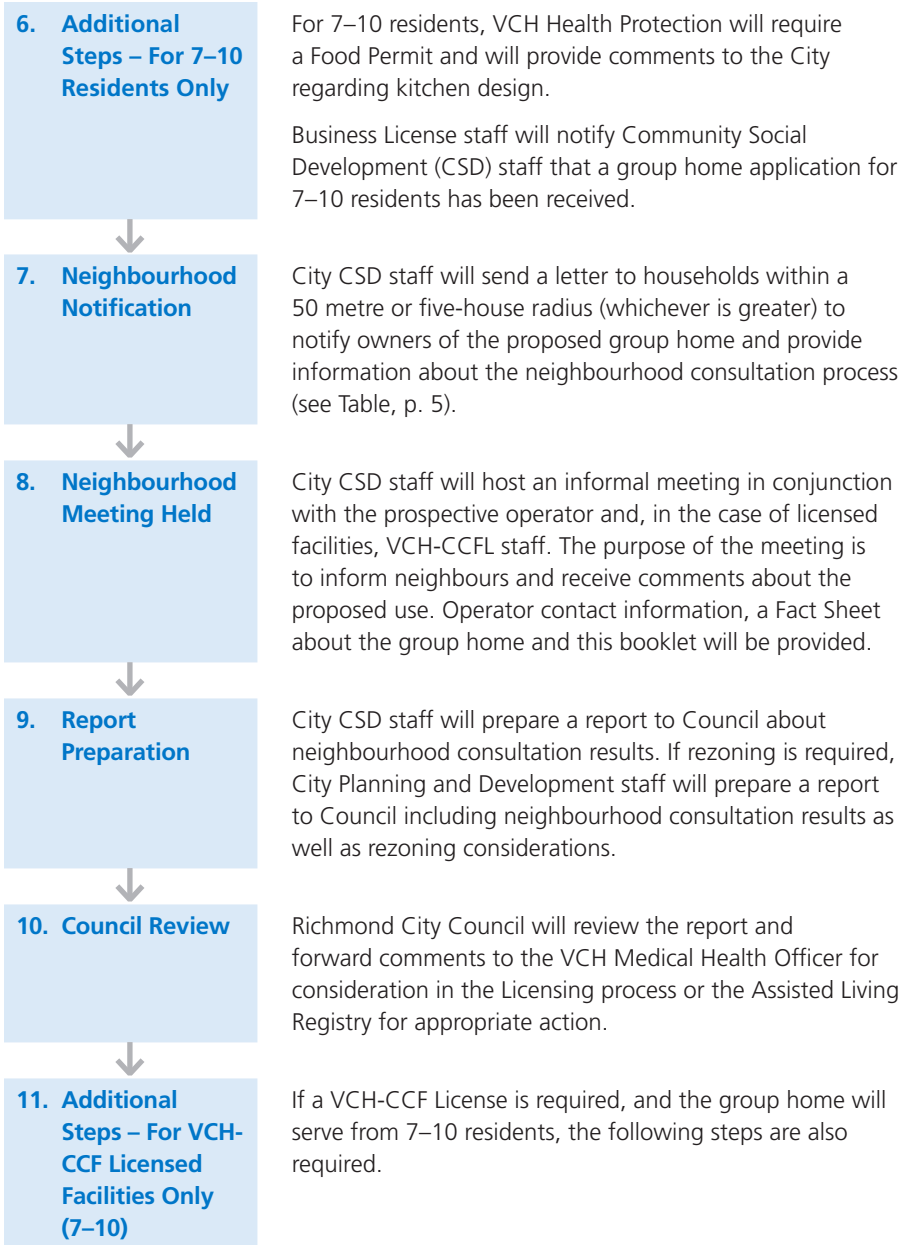
- The prospective operator will apply to VCH for a Community Care Facility License. VCH has a number of requirements to be met, which may require a lengthy process.

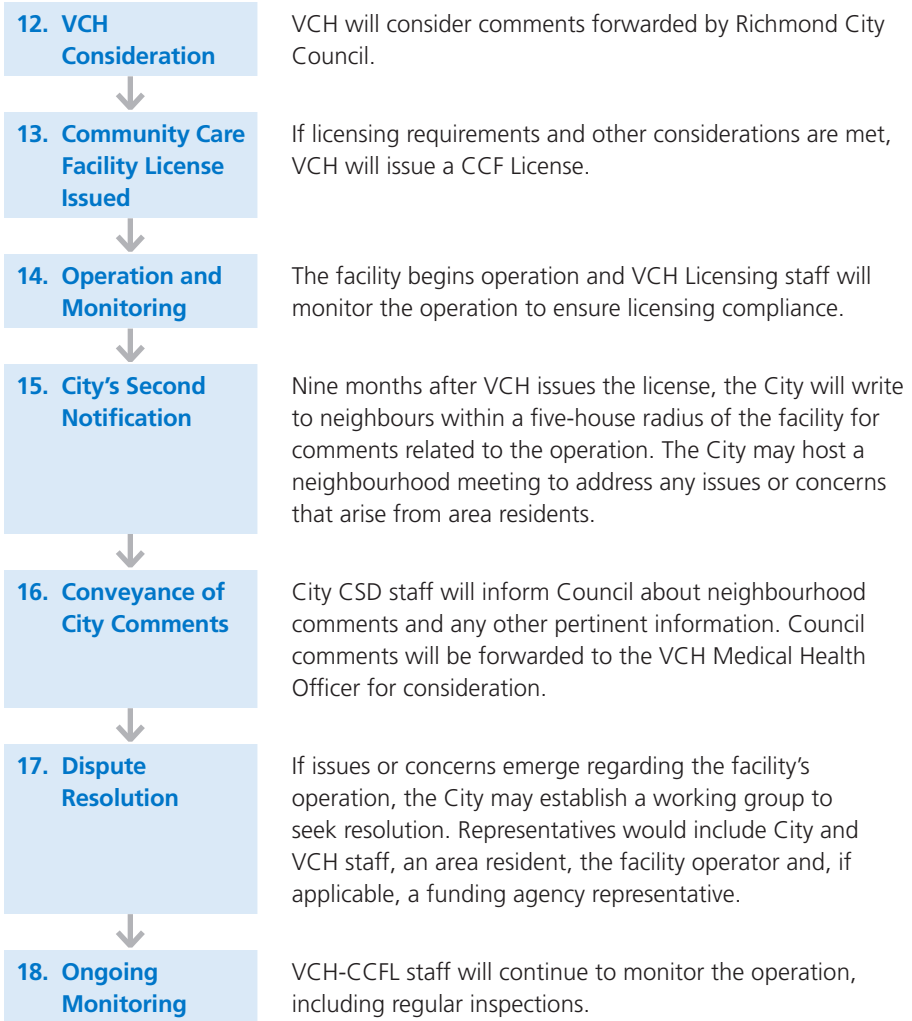
4. City Requirements

VCH-CCFL or MOH-ALR staff will refer prospective operators to the City Customer Services Department to review City location and approval requirements.

5. City Review

- Customer Service staff will review the application with respect to zoning and location requirements.
- If the site is appropriately zoned, the applicant is referred to Building Approvals staff to determine if the premises meet building code, plumbing and fire safety requirements. Site inspections are required. For new construction, a building permit application including three sets of plans must be submitted for review. Final building approval, plumbing and fire safety inspections are required before licensing or registration is approved.
- If rezoning would be required to accommodate the group home, Customer Service staff will provide the applicant with information about the rezoning process. If the applicant decides to pursue rezoning, the applicant will be referred to Planning & Development staff to review rezoning considerations (e.g. possible costs, consultation requirements, timeline) and the Council approval process.
- For-profit operators require a business license and will be referred to Business License staff for application information. Non-profit operators do not require a business license.
- Relevant documents are submitted to MOH-ALR or VCH-CCFL.
- For 3–6 residents, no further City steps are required.





Contact Information

Contact	Website	Phone Number
BC Ministry of Health — Assisted Living Registry	www2.gov.bc.ca	1-866-714-3378
City of Richmond — Building Approvals	www.richmond.ca	604-276-4285
City of Richmond — Business Licences	www.richmond.ca	604-276-4328
City of Richmond — Customer Service	www.richmond.ca	604-276-4000
City of Richmond — Fire & Rescue Department	www.richmond.ca	604-278-5131
Vancouver Coastal Health — Community Care Facilities Licensing	www.vch.ca	604-233-3147
Vancouver Coastal Health — Health Protection	www.vch.ca/public-health	604-736-2033





City of Richmond

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