

**STATE OF FLORIDA  
DEPARTMENT OF ELDER AFFAIRS**

**IN RE: HAPPY RETIREMENT INC.,  
D/B/A VILLA RIO VISTA**

**DOEA Case No.**

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**EMERGENCY PETITION FOR TEMPORARY  
WAIVER OF/ VARIANCE FROM OF RULE 58A-5.036**

Happy Retirement Inc., d/b/a Villa Rio Vista (hereinafter “Petitioner” or “Villa Rio”) by and through its undersigned representative, hereby petitions the Florida Department of Elder Affairs (DOEA) for a **Temporary Emergency Waiver/Variance** of *Rule 58A-5.036, F.A.C.*, pursuant to *Section 120.542, Florida Statutes, Rule 28-10.004, Florida Administrative Code; and Rule 58A-5.036, F.A.C.*

**BACKGROUND**

1. Petitioner operates a fifty (50) bed assisted living facilities licensed under *Chapter 429, Part II, Florida Statutes* located at 1115 SE 6<sup>th</sup> Terrace in Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33316.
2. The Agency/Department affected by this petition is the Florida Department of Elder Affairs, 4040 Esplanade Way, Tallahassee, Florida 32399.
3. Villa Rio has cared for one of Florida’s most vulnerable population as an assisted living facility for over twenty-six (26) years.
4. Villa Rio provides an affordable home with assisted living services allowing older adults to live in a safe, caring and supportive environment while maintaining their dignity, independence, and purpose.

5. The residents at Villa Rio suffer from various conditions, illnesses and diseases, but all are ambulatory, use a power scooter, or a wheelchair. A critical component of meeting the needs of those residents is the hiring and training of qualified staff; and the monitoring of resident admissions to the facilities. Villa Rio does not provide housing to persons that are bedbound or require tremendous amounts of assistance with the daily living.

**Villa Rio Seeks A  
Temporary Waiver/Variance of Rule 58A-5.036**

6. The Florida Department Elder Affairs adopted Rule 58A-5.036 on March 26, 2018 which requires full compliance not later than January 1, 2019 unless a variance or waiver is granted.
7. Based on the estimates and time lines Villa Rio received the need for a variance is detrimental. The outcome for Villa Rio if the variance is not granted will result in fines, sanctions, possible closure and the removal of residents that have been entrusted in our care. Independent deadline created by the Rule creates a hardship.
8. Villa Rio believes that this is not an emergency or an instance of Petitioner's own making, but one that is based on various factors such as the acquisition of the generator, time lines for installation, and the need to work through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development approval (which is required for additional debts being placed on the property) are among the items that hinder ultimate compliance.
9. Villa Rio submits that it has attempted to comply with the Rule since implementation. They have reached out to several companies and began the process over twelve months ago. Petitioner decided to use a company that can provide a turn-key solution as quick as possible for compliance.

10. Villa Rio request a variance from Rule 58A-5.036, F.A.C. The rule was adopted by the Florida Department of Elder Affairs to implement §429.41 and 429.19, F.S., and it provides in pertinent part:

§429.28(1), F.S.

...(1) No resident of a facility shall be deprived of any civil or legal rights, benefits, or privileges guaranteed by law, the Constitution of the State of Florida, or the Constitution of the United States as a resident of a facility. Every resident of a facility shall have the right to:

(a) Live in a safe and decent living environment, free from abuse and neglect.

§429.41(1), F.S.

...The agency, in consultation with the department, may adopt rules to administer the requirements of part II of chapter 408, F.S. In order to provide safe and sanitary facilities and the highest quality of resident care accommodating the needs and preferences of residents, the department, in consultation with the agency, the Department of Children and Family Services, and the Department of Health, shall adopt rules, policies, and procedures to administer this part, which must include reasonable and fair minimum standards in relation to:

(a) The requirements for and maintenance of facilities, not in conflict with chapter 553, relating to plumbing, heating, cooling, lighting, ventilation, living space, and other housing conditions, which will ensure the health, safety, and comfort of residents suitable to the size of the structure.

#### **CREATION OF A SUBSTANTIAL HARDSHIP AS TO PETITIONER**

11. Section 120.542(2), F.S., provides that waivers shall be granted when the person subject to the rule demonstrates that the purpose of the underlying statute will be or has been achieved by other means by the person and when application of a rule would create a substantial hardship or would violate principles of fairness. For purposes of this section, “substantial hardship” means a demonstrated economic, technological, legal, or other type of hardship to the person requesting the variance or waiver. See, Section, 120.542(2),

F.S. For purposes of this section, “substantial hardship” means a demonstrated economic, technological, legal, or other type of hardship to the person requesting the variance or waiver.

For purposes of this section, “principles of fairness” are violated when the literal application of a rule affects a particular person in a manner significantly different from the way it affects other similarly situated persons who are subject to the rule. As discussed below, the application of *Rule 58A-5, F.A.C.* creates a substantial hardship Villa Rio.

12. Furthermore, the Florida legislature has directed the Department of Elder Affairs to take many factors into account when making rules to ensure assisted living facilities should not be regulated as a medical or nursing facility. *See, 429.01(2), F.S.*
13. Villa Rio provides care at a lower reimbursement rate than private pay facilities of the same size due to their reimbursement being provided predominately by Florida's Medicaid program. The funds needed to purchase the generator required financing which the Petitioner was eventually able to secure.
14. Villa Rio has developed a timeframe for the installation of the generator required by Rule and it is expected that it will have the generator installed by not later than March 2019.
15. Villa Rio does have additional approvals that will be needed by the local municipality having jurisdiction of zoning.
16. Villa Rio has acquired all the physical equipment needed to be installed on the property.
17. Villa Rio submits the literal application of the Rule will thus create a substantial hardship, more specifically related to the technological aspects required for a 125 KW Standby Generator. Villa Rio would also argue that there exist a legal impediment that will delay the installation based on administrative requirements, mainly city ordinances that must be adhered to prior to installation.
18. Villa Rio is legally unable to move forward without the corporation of the local municipality and the experts that are able to assist with compliance. Villa Rio submits that they do not have

the staff or expertise to fulfill the project without the assistance of highly trained individuals to which they have contracted. Accordingly, the waiver/variance should be granted.

**THE UNDERLYING PURPOSE OF SECTIONS 429.19 and 429.41,  
FLORIDA STATUTES WILL BE ACHIEVED**

19. The Departments authority and law implemented as noted in Rule 58A-5.036, F.A.C. include Sections 429.19, F.S. and 429.41, F.S.
20. Section 429.19 provides that In addition to the requirements of part II of chapter 408, the agency shall impose an administrative fine in the manner provided in chapter 120 for the violation of any provision of this part, part II of chapter 408, and applicable rules by an assisted living facility, for the actions of any person subject to level 2 background screening under s. 408.809, for the actions of any facility employee, or for an intentional or negligent act seriously affecting the health, safety, or welfare of a resident of the facility.
21. Each violation of this part and adopted rules shall be classified according to the nature of the violation and the gravity of its probable effect on facility residents. The agency shall indicate the classification on the written notice of the violation as follows:
  - a. Class “I” violations are defined in s. 408.813. The agency shall impose an administrative fine for a cited class I violation in an amount not less than \$5,000 and not exceeding \$10,000 for each violation.
  - b. Class “II” violations are defined in s. 408.813. The agency shall impose an administrative fine for a cited class II violation in an amount not less than \$1,000 and not exceeding \$5,000 for each violation.
  - c. Class “III” violations are defined in s. 408.813. The agency shall impose an administrative fine for a cited class III violation in an amount not less than \$500 and not exceeding \$1,000 for each violation.
  - d. Class “IV” violations are defined in s. 408.813. The agency shall impose an administrative fine for a cited class IV violation in an amount not less than \$100 and not exceeding \$200 for each violation.

- e. Regardless of the class of violation cited, instead of the fine amounts listed in paragraphs (a)-(d), the agency shall impose an administrative fine of \$500 if a facility is found not to be in compliance with the background screening requirements as provided in s. 408.809.

22. Section 429.19, F.S. provides for the sanctioning of assisted living facilities. More specifically, it provides the following:

For purposes of this section, in determining if a penalty is to be imposed and in fixing the amount of the fine, the agency shall consider the following factors:

- (a) The gravity of the violation, including the probability that death or serious physical or emotional harm to a resident will result or has resulted, the severity of the action or potential harm, and the extent to which the provisions of the applicable laws or rules were violated.
- (b) Actions taken by the owner or administrator to correct violations.
- (c) Any previous violations.
- (d) The financial benefit to the facility of committing or continuing the violation.
- (e) The licensed capacity of the facility.

23. *Section 429.41, F.S.* was enacted to provide safe and sanitary facilities and the highest quality of resident care accommodating the needs and preferences of residents. *See, Section 429.41(1), F.S.* Furthermore, it can be also derived that the Florida Legislature also desired rules that would address cooling, lighting, ventilation, living space, and other housing conditions, which will ensure the health, safety, and comfort of residents suitable to the size of the structure. *See, Section 429.41(1), F.S.*

24. *Section 429.41, F.S.* further provides that a Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan must be submitted for review and approval to the local emergency management agency. The statute also provides for standards must be included in the rules adopted by the department after consultation with the Division of Emergency Management. At a minimum, the rules must

provide for plan components that address emergency evacuation transportation; adequate sheltering arrangements; post-disaster activities, including provision of emergency power, food, and water; post-disaster transportation; supplies; staffing; emergency equipment; individual identification of residents and transfer of records; communication with families; and responses to family inquiries. The comprehensive emergency management plan is subject to review and approval by the local emergency management agency. During its review, the local emergency management agency shall ensure that the following agencies, at a minimum, are given the opportunity to review the plan: the Department of Elderly Affairs, the Department of Health, the Agency for Health Care Administration, and the Division of Emergency Management. Also, appropriate volunteer organizations must be given the opportunity to review the plan. The local emergency management agency shall complete its review within 60 days and either approve the plan or advise the facility of necessary revisions. See Section 429.41(1) (b), F.S.

25. Petitioner has complied with this requirement and has an approved Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan.

26. *Section 429.28, F.S.* was enacted to that residents had rights that should be afforded to all residents. Among many of those the right of residents of assisted living facilities to have a safe and decent living environment, free from abuse and neglect. *See, Section 429.28(1), F.S.*

27. A variance/waiver of the Rule will not impair the purpose of the statute, which is to provide for the safety of residents before, during, and after an emergency.

28. Villa Rio has been providing the care and services to residents through several storms, to include hurricanes. They have continued to make care and services to its residents a priority.

29. The staff at Villa Rio has scheduled training from a licensed professional to learn how to keep residents safe during extreme heat conditions and how to recognize and address conditions that may be related to heat.
30. Villa Rio continues to provide an extremely high staff to resident ratios that allow them to interact and understand the residents and their families.
31. Villa Rio will acquire and maintain small portable generators, spot coolers, (portable air conditioning units), window units and fans that will cool areas of the facility during the time needed to obtain compliance with the Rule.
32. Villa Rio will continue to follow the legislative requirements for the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, adhere to the local emergency management officials as it pertains to added safety requirements.
33. Villa Rio currently has a 125 KW, 600 amp generator that has been purchased and onsite at the facility for more than twelve (12) months that will serve various miscellaneous loads to include the air conditioning equipment.
34. It must be noted that Villa Rio is not seeking a variance or waiver from providing exceptional care and services to its residents, but rather from the technological, legal and governmental delay hardships it is facing based on the rule.
35. Villa Rio submits the following exhibits to its petition that provides evidence of ongoing attempted compliance:
  - (a) Invoice for Generator from October 2017 attached hereto as Exhibit "A"
  - (b) The wire transfer for \$22,000 attached hereto as Exhibit "B"
  - (c) The submittal of the zoning by the facility's licensed contractor on August 8, 2019 attached hereto as Exhibit "C"
  - (d) Revised Agreement for installation attached hereto as Exhibit "D"

- (e) Various additional drawings and other information submitted with the zoning request attached hereto as Exhibit “E”
- (f) A copy of Villa Rio’s Comprehensive Emergency Management approval attached hereto as Exhibit “F”

**TYPE OF WAIVER/VARIANCE SOUGHT**

36. Villa Rio seeks a Temporary Emergency Waiver from/Variance of *Rule 58A-5.036, F.A.C.*

**DEPARTMENT ACTION REQUESTED**

For the foregoing reasons, Petitioner, Villa Rio requests that the Department of Elder Affairs grant its Petition for a Temporary Waiver of /Variance From of Emergency *Rule 58A-5.036, F.A.C.* for not less than May 31, 2019 [seven (7) months] to obtain permitting, final plans, delivery, and installation of the generator. The Undersigned has requested both a Waiver from *Rule 58A-5.036, F.A.C.* and a Variance from *Rule 58A-5.036, F.A.C.* for the purpose of seeking additional time in order to comply fully with the Department’s Rule. If the Department deems that the amount of time requested is not acceptable, we would request a time the Department believes to be reasonable under the circumstances.

Respectfully Submitted this 26<sup>th</sup> day of November 2018.

*Shaddrick A. Haston*

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that a true copy of this Petition for Waiver has been provided to Francis Carbone, Agency Clerk, Florida Department of Elder Affairs, 4040 Esplanade Way Tallahassee, Florida 32399 and via fax to 850.414.2006 and U.S. Certified Mail, to the Joint Administrative Procedures Committee, Room 120, The Holland Building, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1300 this 26<sup>th</sup> day of November 2018.

*Shadrick A. Haston*

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