

# Providing Gender Inclusive Facilities

These guidelines have been updated to comply with the July 1, 2024 supplement issued by the CA Building Standards Commission amending the provisions of the 2022 California Plumbing Code, California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Part 5.

UPDATED 03/21/2025

## 1. Introduction

- A. These guidelines seek to create an inclusive campus environment for all students, faculty, staff and visitors, regardless of their gender identity. These guidelines provide direction on the implementation of gender inclusive facilities in UC buildings and so the UC community can use facilities that correspond to their gender identity.
- B. These guidelines apply to projects at UC-owned facilities, National Laboratories, Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR), or Natural Reserve System (NRS), having not reached the 100% Design Development milestone prior to the published date of this guidance. Projects include new construction, major renovations, and UC leases of more than 50% of a building or leases with a duration of 10 years or longer. Privatized projects developed on UC-owned land to be used for University-related purposes requiring public restrooms in accordance with the California Plumbing Code (CPC) shall comply with this policy. This policy shall not apply to UC facilities under HCAI jurisdiction.
- C. Campuses within the University of California may have altered facilities in accordance with the June 10, 2015 directive from President Napolitano. This guideline does not intend for campuses to reevaluate existing facilities having already been reviewed, approved and altered under the guidance of the Campus Building Official, in compliance with the President's 2015 directive.
- D. If a Design Professional offers a design solution complying with this guidance, and not in compliance with the current issue of the California Building Code, an alternative means and methods narrative shall be provided in accordance with CBC 104.11 Alternative Materials, Design and Methods of Construction and Equipment, prior to the start of the Design Development Phase.

## 2. Background

- A. The University of California is committed to creating and sustaining a campus environment that supports and values all members of our community. These

guidelines focus on providing an inclusive environment, consistent with UC principles of community and efforts around civility and respect. Gender inclusion should provide access and equality by creating an environment that is accessible and respectful of all individuals. One aspect of creating an inclusive environment is the availability of restroom facilities for all.

- B. Based upon the age of the campus, there are many existing buildings across the University of California that do not have gender inclusive facilities. Students, faculty, staff, and visitors are left without comfortable or safe places to change, shower, or use the restroom, or they are required to go to another building to seek out an inclusive facility. Efforts to convert existing gender specific facilities to gender inclusive should be taken where possible. The goal is that no individual would need to leave their current building to locate a restroom, shower, or changing facility.
- C. Budgetary and physical constraints may impact the ability for every existing building to provide a converted gender inclusive restroom.[1]

### 3. Definitions

**CHANGING ROOM:** A room designed for one or more persons partially or fully disrobe and re-dress. Locker rooms fall under this definition. Each changing room shall provide privacy and security. See 6. for a sample gender inclusive changing room and shower layout.

**GENDER EXPRESSION [2]:** The manner in which a person communicates about gender to others through external means such as clothing, appearance, or mannerisms. This communication may be conscious or subconscious and may or may not reflect their gender identity or sexual orientation. While most people’s understandings of gender expressions relate to masculinity and femininity, there are countless combinations that may incorporate both masculine and feminine expressions—or neither—through androgynous expressions. An individual’s gender expression does not automatically imply one’s gender identity. All people have gender expressions.

**GENDER IDENTITY [2]:** A person’s deeply held core sense of self in relation to gender. Gender identity does not always correspond to biological sex. People become aware of their gender identity at many different stages of life, from as early as 18 months and into adulthood. Gender identity is a separate concept from sexuality and gender expression.

**GENDER INCLUSIVE FACILITY:** A facility, including but not limited to, restrooms, showers, locker rooms and changing rooms, usable by persons of all gender identities. Gender inclusive facilities shall be fully accessible and in compliance with the California Building Code (CBC).

**GENDER INCLUSIVE RESTROOM (GIRR):** A restroom usable by persons of all Gender Identities. A GIRR may be configured as single-user or multi-user. Each water closet or urinal shall be installed in a privacy compartment. See figure 4.1.5 for a sample multi-fixture gender inclusive restroom layout.

**GENDER SPECIFIC:** Designated for use by one gender (male or female).

**MAJOR RENOVATION:** The renovation of any existing facility, whether or not combined with any addition, which affects a floor area exceeding fifty percent (50%) of the existing floor area in gross square feet. When any changes are made to a facility, such as partitions, walls, floor, ceiling, and roof structures, or similar components, the floor area of all rooms affected by such changes shall be included in computing floor areas for the purposes of applying this definition. This definition does not apply to the replacement of roofing, mechanical or electrical upgrades, repair or replacement of existing foundations, installation of energy-efficient windows of like size, removal and replacement of interior wall coverings, or projects undertaken in response to the UC seismic safety policy.

**PRIVACY COMPARTMENT:** A compartment enclosing a water closet or urinal provided with floor-to-ceiling pre-manufactured panels, continuous brackets at abutting panels, and a floor-to-ceiling door with continuous hinges and full height astragals. Privacy compartments may also be constructed with full-height walls and door with head jamb casing. Each compartment door shall be lockable from the inside of the compartment, with a door locking device that is readily distinguishable as locked from the outside of the compartment. Privacy compartments and doors which are not full height or floor to ceiling may be permitted by the enforcing agency.

**RESTROOM:** Any facility equipped with toilets, urinals, lavatories or other similar accommodations, in a public facility for the use of the public for personal hygiene and comfort. “In a public facility” and “for the use of the public” in this context covers each UC facility and restroom, except for facilities located within private residences or apartments, and within dormitory suites.

**SHOWER:** A space to bathe or shower. Each shower shall be installed in a full-height privacy compartment. See 6. for a sample gender inclusive changing room and shower layout.

**SINGLE USER RESTROOM:** A restroom facility designed for use by no more than one occupant at a time, or for family or assisted use; that contains a lavatory and, not more than one water closet, or one water closet and one urinal, with a locking mechanism controlled by the user from within the restroom.

**TECHNICALLY INFEASIBLE:** A conversion of a restroom facility, that has little likelihood of being accomplished because the existing structural conditions require removal or alteration of a load-bearing member that is an essential part of the structural frame, or because other existing physical, site, accessibility or life safety system constraints prohibit the installation of privacy compartments that are in full and strict compliance with the minimum requirements for new construction.

**UC-OWNED BUILDING:** A building owned by the UC Regents, on land owned by the UC Regents, or a building owned by a third-party on land owned by UC.

## 4. Guidelines and Compliance

- A. The University is the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) for matters of code regulations on University projects. Refer to UC Facilities Manual, Volume 3, Chapter 4 for additional information on the “local jurisdiction” of each campus.
- B. All restroom construction, conversions, and alterations, including signage, are required to be submitted for review and approval to the Campus Building Official prior to implementation.
- C. Gender inclusive facilities shall be included in the building-wide calculation of total fixtures as required by the California Plumbing Code (CPC).
- D. The required fixture count for newly constructed facilities shall be calculated as required by 422.1. of the CPC and as follows:
  - a. A minimum of 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the required sanitary fixtures for the facility shall be provided in GIRR.
  - b. The remaining provided fixtures shall be distributed proportionately between the gender specific restrooms in accordance with 422.1 of the CPC.
  - c. In facilities where only GIRR are proposed, no fewer than 20% of the sanitary fixtures provided on each floor shall be located within single-user GIRR.
- E. If the work occurs as part of a new building or major renovation or lease, gender inclusive facilities shall be provided in accordance with the following parameters:
  - a. Provide at least one GIRR on each floor where restrooms are required.
  - b. Provide at least one single-user restroom in the vicinity of gender specific multi-user restrooms. Single-user restrooms shall be located on the same story as the gender specific multi-user restrooms and within a maximum travel distance of 500'. All single-user restrooms shall be gender inclusive and accessible as required by the CBC and CPC, and signed accordingly.
  - c. Where showers and/or changing rooms are required, twenty percent (20%) of the accommodations shall be gender inclusive and accessible per CBC, up

to a maximum of five and a minimum of one. See 6. for an example of a gender inclusive locker, shower and changing room layout.

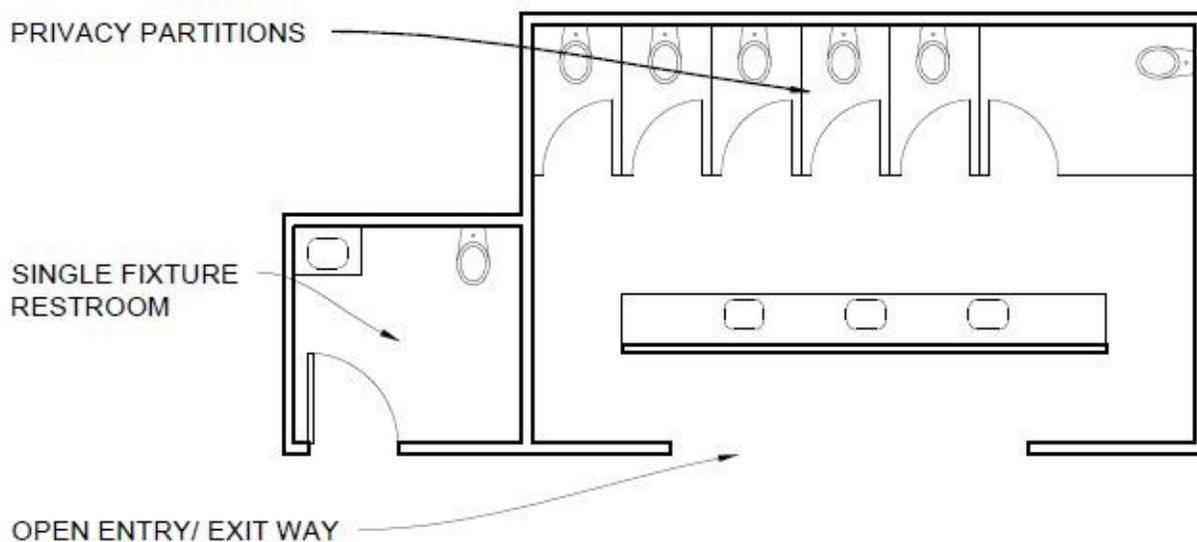
- d. Where lockers are required, twenty percent (20%) of the accommodations shall be gender inclusive and accessible per CBC. See 4.1.6 for an example of a gender inclusive locker, shower and changing room layout.
- F. For work occurring that is not part of a new building or major renovation or lease, existing multi-user gender specific restrooms may be converted to multi-user GIRR in accordance with the following parameters:
- a. Where a multi-user restroom is planned for conversion to a multi-user GIRR within a building that does not contain a multi-user GIRR, non-full height partitions between fixtures may be permitted, provided all the following:
    - i. The installation of full-height privacy compartments is determined to be technically infeasible by the Campus Building Official and Campus Fire Marshal.
    - ii. The partitions between fixtures are installed or altered to be in compliance with the privacy compartment provisions of these guidelines and the CPC to the maximum extent feasible.
    - iii. Urinals, if provided within the GIRR, shall be installed in full height compliant privacy compartment or a separate private area. Urinals may be removed from service or replaced with toilets provided that the required number of sanitary fixtures for the facility are provided in accordance with CPC 422.1.
    - iv. If the planned multi-user GIRR renovation results in the conversion of the only men's or women's gender specific multi-user restroom within a building, each sanitary fixture in the converted restroom shall be installed within fully compliant full height privacy compartments.
  - b. In facilities where conversions result in only GIRR being provided, no fewer than 20% of the sanitary fixtures provided on each floor shall be located within single-user GIRR.
- G. Gender inclusive facilities shall be identified in accordance with CBC Chapter 11 signage requirements and the following:
- a. Gender inclusive facilities shall be identified in accordance with CBC Chapter 11 signage requirements. For GIRR, provide a white triangle within a

blue circle, without gender pictograms on the door. CBC-required room identification signage shall provide the minimum required information and pictogram for access. Signage for changing rooms and showers shall follow this recommendation as applicable. Signage shall comply with [Sample Gender Inclusive Signs \(Attachment B\)](#)

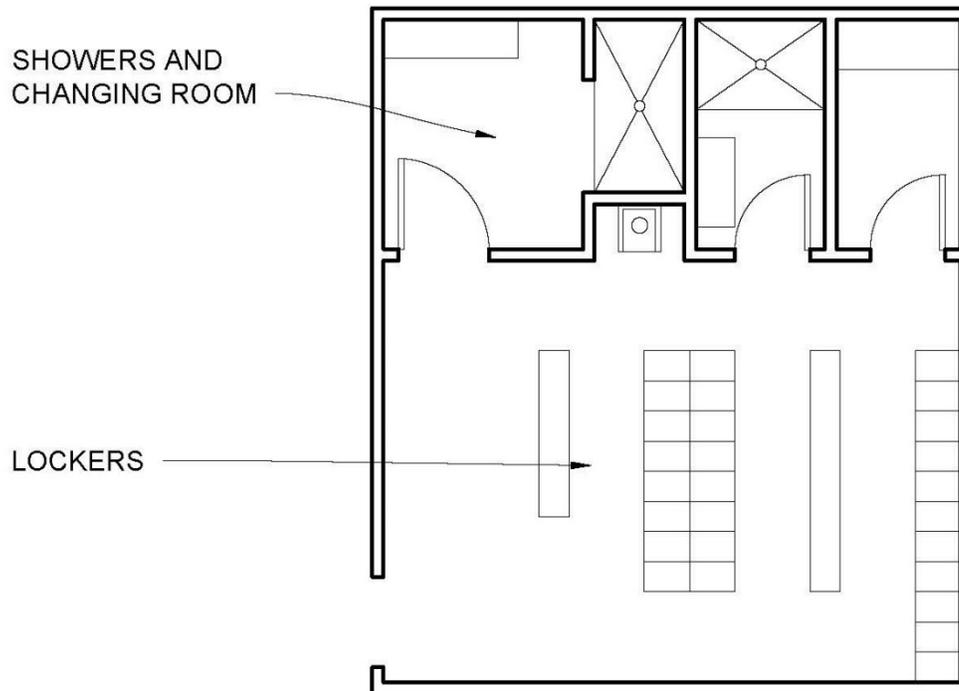
- b. In existing buildings where gender inclusive facilities are not provided, provide and install directional signage indicating the location of the nearest gender inclusive facilities.
- c. Prominently list the locations of gender inclusive facilities on campus websites.

H. In instances where hardship may preclude full compliance with these guidelines, campus may request a waiver, as outlined in [Attachment A](#). Approval authority for the waivers is delegated to the Chancellor and may be re-delegated to one individual, in writing. Attachment A may be used or modified by each UC location. If the campus determines that it is physically impracticable to provide a GIRR in a building, campus may elect to offer an existing gender inclusive facility in another location, if within 500 feet of travel from the building.

## 5. Example Gender Inclusive Restroom Layout [3]



## 6. Example Changing Room and Shower Layout [3]



## 7. Example Process for Managing Requests to Convert Facilities

Outside of new construction and major remodels, an individual may request to change an existing gender-specific facility to GIRR, or request that a GIRR be provided within a specific University building. The following process provides an example for how a campus might respond to these requests. Each campus should develop a process that meets the needs of their campus, while ensuring all key stakeholders (CBO, LGBTQ Director, Building Managers, etc.) are involved. Each request should be documented at each step in the established process.

- A. The individual submits a request to the Campus Building Official (CBO) and notifies the campus LGBTQ Director for review.
- B. The CBO contacts the Building Manager where the conversion has been requested to seek input on the specific facility that was identified or to identify a facility to consider for conversion.

- C. If the CBO determines the request is feasible, CBO shall forward the request to the appropriate on-campus department to finalize the design and obtain a building permit, prior to construction.
- D. Any plumbing fixture reallocation or room signage change shall be approved by the CBO prior to the change.
- E. During the scoping process, cost implications for the conversion are identified, and the source(s) of funding are determined.
- F. When the funding has been identified and the Building Manager gives their approval, the conversion should move forward through a typical design process, including proper notice to key stakeholders in the building.
- G. In buildings without a Building Manager, key stakeholders, including department chairs, directors, and other administrators should be consulted for their approval to convert the facility.
- H. Education may be needed at various points throughout this process, so the campus LGBTQ Director or other designee should be consulted to educate University students, faculty, and staff on the purpose and the importance of gender inclusive facilities.

## 8. References

1. [Gender Inclusive Facilities in Renovation Projects – Request for Waiver Based on Unreasonable Hardship \(reference template\)\(Attachment A\) \(Excel\)](#)
2. [Sample Gender Inclusive Signs \(pdf\)](#) (Attachment B)

[1] However, in such buildings, students, faculty, and staff may host events and activities that attract groups of community members for a specific time. As such, University staff should consider affixing temporary signage on at least one multi-stall gender-specific restroom nearest to the event/activity that states the restroom is temporarily designated as gender inclusive, specifying the date and time the restroom will be designated as such. Signage might include additional information, such as which fixtures are inside the restroom and where to find other restroom options nearby. Downloadable signage examples and a list of contact information for facilities, event hosts, and a point of contact for education on gender inclusive facilities are recommended.

[2] PFLAG National Glossary of Terms.” Accessed 03/15/2021. <https://Pflag.org/glossary>

[3] Suggested Conceptual Layout only. Designs may vary by location and site conditions.

Updated March 16, 2026