

# Definitions of Hospitals Under California Law

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## General Acute Care Hospital

A “general acute care hospital” is defined in Health and Safety Code Section 1250(a) as:

a health facility having a duly constituted governing body with overall administrative and professional responsibility and an organized medical staff that provides 24-hour inpatient care, including the following basic services: medical, nursing, surgical, anesthesia, laboratory, radiology, pharmacy, and dietary services. A general acute care hospital may include more than one physical plant maintained and operated on separate premises as provided in Section 1250.8. A general acute care hospital that exclusively provides acute medical rehabilitation center services, including at least physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech therapy, may provide for the required surgical and anesthesia services through a contract with another acute care hospital. In addition, a general acute care hospital that, on July 1, 1983, provided required surgical and anesthesia services through a contract or agreement with another acute care hospital may continue to provide these surgical and anesthesia services through a contract or agreement with an acute care hospital. The general acute care hospital operated by the State Department of Developmental Services at Agnews Developmental Center may, until June 30, 2007, provide surgery and anesthesia services through a contract or agreement with another acute care hospital. Notwithstanding the requirements of this subdivision, a general acute care hospital operated by the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation or the Department of Veterans Affairs may provide surgery and anesthesia services during normal weekday working hours, and not provide these services during other hours of the weekday or on weekends or holidays, if the general acute care hospital otherwise meets the requirements of this section.

A “general acute care hospital” includes a “rural general acute care hospital.” However, a “rural general acute care hospital” shall not be required by the department [the California Department of Public Health] to provide surgery and anesthesia services. A “rural general acute care hospital” shall meet either of the following conditions:

- (1) The hospital meets criteria for designation within peer group six or eight, as defined in the report entitled Hospital Peer Grouping for Efficiency Comparison, dated December 20, 1982.
- (2) The hospital meets the criteria for designation within peer group five or seven, as defined in the report entitled Hospital Peer Grouping for Efficiency Comparison, dated December 20, 1982, and has no more than 76 acute care beds and is located in a census dwelling place of 15,000 or less population according to the 1980 federal census.

## Acute Psychiatric Hospital

An “acute psychiatric hospital” is defined in Health and Safety Code Section 1250(b) as:

a health facility having a duly constituted governing body with overall administrative and professional responsibility and an organized medical staff that provides 24-hour inpatient care for persons with mental health disorders or other patients referred to in Division 5

(commencing with Section 5000) or Division 6 (commencing with Section 6000) of the Welfare and Institutions Code, including the following basic services: medical, nursing, rehabilitative, pharmacy, and dietary services.

### **Special Hospital**

A “special hospital” is defined in Health and Safety Code Section 1250(f) as:

a health facility having a duly constituted governing body with overall administrative and professional responsibility and an organized medical or dental staff that provides inpatient or outpatient care in dentistry or maternity.

### **Specialty Hospital**

There is no definition in California law for a “specialty” hospital, which is typically a hospital that specializes in cardiac care or orthopaedic care. In California, these hospitals are licensed as general acute care hospitals under Health and Safety Code Section 1250(a). A general acute care hospital is not required to have an emergency department, although most do.