What are FGI minimum clearances around patient beds?

THE DIRECT ANSWER

The long-standing FGI minimum for a medical/surgical patient room is 3 feet (36 inches) of clearance between the sides and foot of the bed and any wall or other fixed obstruction . That is the wording of the 2018 FGI Guidelines for Design and Construction of Hospitals, as quoted in a Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health variance packet .

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THE CLEARANCE REQUIREMENTS

- Side of bed: minimum 3 feet (36") between each side of the bed and any wall or fixed obstruction, per the 2018 FGI Hospital Guidelines wording for medical/surgical rooms.
- Foot of bed: minimum 3 feet (36") under the same 2018 wording. Shared rooms have historically needed more space at the foot so beds and equipment can pass; confirm the multiple-patient-room value in your adopted edition.
- Circulation: public coverage of the 2026 Residential Code says its clearance requirements were centralized, including a 36-inch clear path from the door to the bed, window, and bathroom (EFA Magazine).
- Family zone: earlier editions specified minimum clear floor area per family member (e.g., 30 sq ft) — check the adopted edition's current language.

FIELD QUESTION

What is the minimum clearance on each side of a hospital bed?

Under the 2018 FGI Hospital Guidelines, 3 feet (36 inches) between each side of the bed and any wall or fixed obstruction in a medical/surgical room. Confirm the value in the 2026 FGI Hospital Code or your adopted edition.

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Caution: codes, editions, and targets vary by facility and authority having jurisdiction (AHJ). Figures marked as common practice are facility targets, not code requirements. Confirm against your AHJ and the current code text before acting.