BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

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WHY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH?

Behavioral Health is a rapidly growing industry in healthcare in North America. Existing construction methods for behavioral health spaces are limited, costly, laborious to install, and have long lead times for materials. Falkbuilt is perfectly positioned to solve these problems and take the lead in behavioral health construction.

Falkbuilt's solid wall solutions are a natural fit for behavioral health spaces. From strength and durability, to customized details for unique spaces and fast lead times, Falkbuilt offers an entirely new methodology for behavioral health construction.

This document will help to equip you for conversations with architects, designers, general contractors, and end users. The following sections will cover the basics of behavioral health construction and how to respond to the needs of behavioral health with Falkbuilt solutions.

ABOUT BEHAVIORAL HEALTH GUIDELINES

Behavioral health is a relatively new area of healthcare practice. As a result, there is very little in the way of specific, agreed-upon design guidelines, codes, and other official regulation of construction of behavioral health spaces. Guidelines for behavioral spaces are evolving in real-time.*

The guidelines developed for this document were drawn from a number of sources, jurisdictions, and common practices gleaned from conversations with behavioral health consultants. You can expect a number of gray areas to arise in your conversations about design guidelines. This works to your benefit, as Falkbuilt is uniquely positioned to set the tone and drive the development of guidelines for behavioral health spaces.

Review the next section to better understand common practices for how behavioral health spaces are organized, as well as common terminology and currently-available solutions.

** Some examples of available guidelines include: Facility Guidelines Institute's Behavioral Crisis Unit guidelines, New York Office of Mental Health's Patient Safety Standards, Materials, and Systems Guidelines, Department of Veterans' Affairs Design Guide for Inpatient Mental Health & Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program Facilities, and the Behavioral Health Facility Consulting Design Guide.*

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BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PRACTICES & TERMINOLOGY

LEVELS OF RISK

Spaces in behavioral health environments are organized into risk levels, 1 through 5, depending on the required level of patient supervision. Typically, Environmental Safety Risk Assessments are performed to determine the risk level for each space and design guidelines to satisfy requirements for patient and staff safety increase as the risk level increases. Risk level 5 spaces should be assessed on a case-by-case basis and may not be present in all facilities. Determining what risk level is assigned to each space is crucial, prior to the start of the Falkbuilt design process.

1. Areas where patients are not allowed.

2. Areas behind self-closing and self-locking doors where patients are highly supervised and not left alone, such as counseling rooms, activity rooms, interview rooms, group rooms, as well as corridors that do not contain objects that patients can use for climbing and where staff are regularly present.

3. Areas that are not behind self-closing and self-locking doors where patients may spend time with minimal supervision, such as lounges, day rooms, and corridors where staff are not regularly present. Open nurse stations should be considered to be under this level.

4. Areas where patients spend a great deal of time alone with minimal or no supervision, such as patient rooms (semi-private and private) and patient toilets.

5. Areas where staff interact with newly-admitted patients who present potential unknown risks or where patients may be in a highly agitated condition. Due to these conditions, these areas fall outside the parameters of the risk map and require special considerations for patient and staff safety. Such areas include seclusion rooms and admission rooms.

As defined in the Environmental Safety Risk Assessment Levels of Concern in BHFC Design's 2024 Behavioral Health Design Guide.

LIGATURE RESISTANCE

Ligature points refer to elements where patients can attach materials (e.g. cords, ropes, etc.) to create a ligature or anchor point for self-harm. **Ligature resistant** elements are designed to eliminate ligature points in a space. Designing with ligature resistant elements plays an essential role in mitigating the risk to patients in behavioral health spaces. Examples of ligature resistant design elements include doors or hardware that minimize gaps, reveal fillers for panelized wall systems, or millwork with sloped edges.

ligature resistant door hardware

BALANCING COMFORT & DURABILITY

The overall goal of construction for behavioral health spaces is to create a space that fosters healing, reduces the risk of harm, and supports both patients and staff in the recovery process. However, patients may attempt to damage the space (intentionally or otherwise); construction materials in these environments must be secure, easy to maintain, and should also mitigate any risks to patients and staff.

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FALKBUILT FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Falkbuilt provides solutions for behavioral health spaces of all risk levels, with solutions created in collaboration with–and vetted by–human eXperience, an operational behavioral health consulting firm.

FALKBUILT CONSTRUCTION FOR DIFFERENT RISK LEVELS

Risk levels for each space are typically determined through Environmental Safety Risk Assessments. Once risk levels for each space are assessed, appropriate construction details for each space are determined. Falkbuilt has developed a set of details and general design guidelines for the typical construction requirements of each risk level. However, these guidelines should be treated as a starting point for discussion.

There is no one-size-fits-all methodology for construction for each risk level. Details commonly-specified specified for risk level 4 spaces (barricade resistant doors, cladding reveal fillers, etc.) may be requested for risk level 2 and 3 spaces. Typical details for each risk level should be discussed in coordination with the architect or design team familiar with the risk assessment to determine the best approach. Some spaces may require case-by-case assessment.

RISK LEVEL 1	RISK LEVEL 2	RISK LEVEL 3	RISK LEVEL 4
FALKBUILT STANDARD DETAILS	FALKBUILT STANDARD DETAILS*	FALKBUILT STANDARD & ENHANCED BEHAVIORAL HEALTH DETAILS*	FALKBUILT ENHANCED BEHAVIORAL HEALTH DETAILS

**Details typically specified for risk level 4 spaces may be requested for lower risk level spaces; this is especially common for risk level 3 spaces.*

FALKBUILT STANDARD DETAILS & ENHANCED BEHAVIORAL HEALTH DETAILS

Standard Falkbuilt wall and door details may be compatible with the requirements of risk level 1, 2, and 3 spaces. The McNally solid wall's steel structure and 3/4" MDF cladding already provide ideal durability for most risk levels.

Falkbuilt has developed a series of enhanced behavioral health details for higher risk level spaces to minimize gaps, to eliminate ligature points, to provide barricade-resistant doors, and to provide tamper-resistant electrical details. However, enhanced behavioral health details may be requested for lower risk level spaces, depending on the assessed level of construction for each space.

ENHANCED BEHAVIORAL HEALTH BASE DETAIL

Cladding in higher risk level spaces must be full-height monolithic (i.e. floor to ceiling) and scribed to the floor, with a maximum base reveal of 1/8" to 3/16". Once scribed, the remaining gap must be sealed with security-grade caulking. Falkbuilt recommends Everseal SureBond SB-190 Clear, which is approved for use in behavioral health spaces.

enhanced behavioral health base detail with scribed cladding and security-grade caulking.

The enhanced behavioral health base detail, in conjunction with other details, ensures that cladding is secure and not removable, a key requirement in risk level 4 spaces. Eliminating reveals at the floor, this detail removes the need for applied wall bases–providing potential cost-savings–and supports the safety and durability of the overall solution by removing associated ligature points, when used in combination with other details.

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RECESSED REVEAL FILLERS

In higher risk level spaces, cladding reveals must be filled and sealed to prevent patients from removing cladding, from creating ligature points with other objects, and to keep reveals and partitions free of bodily fluids. To address this challenge, Falkbuilt has developed a new Recessed Reveal Filler extrusion to fill all reveals between cladding. Additionally, all cladding for higher risk level spaces must be full-height monolithic (i.e. floor to ceiling), to ensure that all cladding is as secure as possible and to reduce the overall quantity of reveals.

To accommodate this extrusion, and to create a clean, finished aesthetic, Falkbuilt will also chamfer the edges of cladding for higher risk level spaces. This chamfer provides additional space to allow a more forgiving fit and recess for the filler extrusion. Recessed reveal fillers are sealed in place with the same Everseal SureBond SB-190 Clear caulking utilized at the floor, ensuring all cladding is secure and tamper-resistant.

The recessed reveal filler extrusion is designed to function in all standard Falkbuilt cladding reveal locations, including: in-line horizontal and vertical, outside and inside 90°, outside and inside 135°, and reveals at visible end caps. Custom angles will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

LIGATURE RESISTANT ANTI-BARRICADE DOORS

Doors for level 4 spaces have strict strength and safety requirements, including ligature resistant and anti-barricade design elements. Solutions currently on the market are limited, incredibly expensive ($8000 - $15,000 USD) and have long lead times. Falkbuilt has developed a solution that meets all required safety parameters, costs less than currently-available solutions, and will be available with Falkbuilt's standard 4 week lead time.

Falkbuilt HQ will provide the solid door slab, welded door frame, anti-barricade components, and an optional privacy vision panel. Ligature resistant handle hardware and required double swing ligature resistant barricade hinges will be Branch to Purchase items to ensure that door costs remain lower than other solutions on the market. Falkbuilt has already determined preferred vendors for these Branch to Purchase items. Reach out to our contacts at Townsteel (Sheldon) and ABH Manufacturing (Sandy) for pricing and ordering for the handle and hinge hardware, respectively.

All reveals around the welded door frame, where the frame meets Falkbuilt cladding, will be filled with recessed reveal fillers and security-grade caulking.

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ELECTRICAL & EXPOSED FASTENERS

Typically, standard Falkbuilt electrical solutions will be compatible lower risk level spaces. Higher risk level spaces require high-impact, nylon or stainless steel faceplates, which are already Falkbuilt's standard.

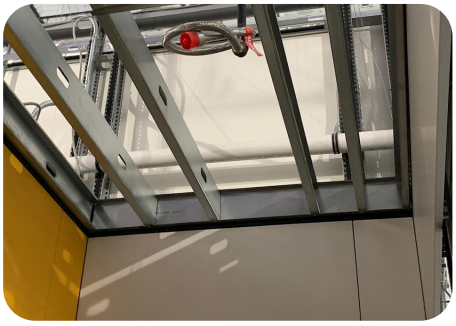
Higher risk level spaces (and some lower risk level, design dependent) require tamper resistant screws for all exposed fasteners. The only exposed fasteners within Falkbuilt solutions are those used to secure electrical faceplates and strike plates. Falkbuilt will provide tamper-resistant Torx screws for these conditions. Other tamper-resistant screws may be specified, but will be Branch to Purchase items.

torx tamper-resistant screws

DECK-TO-DECK CONSTRUCTION

Higher risk level spaces will almost always require deck to deck construction. In cases without deck-to-deck construction, studs must extend at least 14" into the plenum. Ceilings for higher risk level spaces will always be flat drywall ceilings. Typically, these drywall ceilings will attach to the face of studs using Falkbuilt's drop ceiling mount. Deck to deck construction in higher risk level spaces is important for controlling the gap at the top of the wall and provides additional structural support for maintaining the strength of Falkbuilt walls in behavioral health spaces. Further, deck to deck construction allows for meeting acoustic separation and smoke partition requirements; in these conditions, drywall is applied to the studs in the plenum space.

Falkbuilt drop ceiling mount for drywall ceiling installation



standard drywall ceiling framing secured to Falkbuilt drop ceiling mount

CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULES

Lower risk level spaces that do not require enhanced behavioral health details and components will likely adhere to typical Falkbuilt leadtimes and installation times. Higher risk level spaces will require additional installation time, due to scribed cladding, reveal filler components and caulking, as well as installation of welded door frames and barricade-resistant doors doors. Falkbuilt recommends planning for an additional 20% installation time for higher risk level spaces. Even with the additional requirements of higher risk level spaces, Falkbuilt solutions will install considerably faster than other solutions available in the market for behavioral health.

RISK LEVEL 5 SPACES & ADDITIONAL SCOPE

Construction methods for risk level 5 spaces are not clearly defined and require special considerations. Including risk level 5 spaces in Falkbuilt scope will be addressed on a case-by-case basis and it may be beneficial to leave risk level 5 spaces out of Falkbuilt scope in certain cases. For example, seclusion rooms with padded walls are typically considered a risk level 5 space. For these spaces, it may be beneficial for Falkbuilt to provide structure and backing for attachment of padded finishes that are provided by the general contractor or others.

Exam and intake or admission rooms may also be designated risk level 5 spaces, but may have varying requirements. Falkbuilt details may be ideal for these spaces, but must be assessed by the project's architect to determine suitability.

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RISK LEVELS & FALKBUILT DESIGN GUIDELINES CHEATSHEET

1 RISK LEVEL 1 SPACES

- Standard Falkbuilt wall & door details.
- Branch to Purchase hollow metal door frames and accompanying doors may be required.

2 RISK LEVEL 2 SPACES

- Standard Falkbuilt wall & door details should be typical, but enhanced behavioral health details may be requested, design dependent.
- Branch to Purchase hollow metal door frames and barricade resistant doors may be required, design dependent.
- Tamper resistant fasteners may be requested for all electrical faceplates and door strikes.

3 RISK LEVEL 3 SPACES

- Falkbuilt McNally solid walls must be basis of design.
- Falkbuilt enhanced behavioral health base detail may be requested, design dependent.
- Branch to Purchase hollow metal door frames and barricade resistant doors may be requested, design dependent.
- Other enhanced behavioral health details common to higher risk level spaces may be requested, design dependent.
- Tamper resistant fasteners may be requested for all electrical faceplates and door strikes.

4 RISK LEVEL 4 SPACES

- Falkbuilt McNally solid walls must be basis of design.
- Falkbuilt Enhanced Behavioral Health Base Detail required.
  - » Branch to Purchase security-grade caulking required.
- Falkbuilt Recessed Reveal Fillers required.
  - » Branch to Purchase security-grade caulking required.
- Falkbuilt Barricade Resistant Doors with Ligature Resistant Hardware required.
  - » Branch to Purchase ligature resistant locking and passage hardware and double swing ligature resistant barricade hinges required.
  - » Hardware functionality may vary, design dependent. Classroom sets are common.
- Deck-to-deck construction required, or at least 14" into the plenum.
- High-impact nylon or stainless steel faceplates and accompanying tamper resistant fasteners required.
- Additional installation time required for application of security-grade caulking.

5 RISK LEVEL 5 SPACES

- Feasibility determined on a case-by-case basis as it pertains to project safety risk assessment. Typically covers seclusion rooms, examination rooms, and intake or admission rooms.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Will the architect's design drawing set specify details required for each space?

A: No. Spaces must be assessed on a case-by-case basis to determine the the risk level for each space. Details required for different risk levels are then determined in coordination with the architect and design team, based on assessed risk levels. For example, in-patient rooms (where patients will be left unsupervised overnight or for longer periods of time) are assessed to be risk level 4 spaces and will require all enhanced behavioral health details.

Q: Are there additional details to be aware of when specifying enhanced behavioral health details?

A: Be aware of all spaces assessed to be higher risk level, such as in-patient rooms or rooms where patients will be left unsupervised (risk level 3 & 4 spaces). Further, any spaces that adjoin higher risk level spaces may require standard details on one side and enhanced details on the other side. For example, the inside wall of the in-patient, risk level 4 space may receive all enhanced behavioral health details on the interior side, with lower risk level details on the exterior side.

Q: How should I specify enhanced behavioral health details?

A: Specify enhanced behavioral health details using the Behavioral Health (BH) keynote, per room. By default, the keynote will indicate that all interior walls for the specified room are to receive enhanced behavioral health details.

Q: How much security-grade caulking–Falkbuilt recommendeds Everseal SureBond SB-190–will I need for level 4 spaces and how much does it cost?

A: Typically, 1 tube per 5lf. of wall. Required amount will vary, depending on room layout and design. 1 tube per 5lf assumes above-average usage. Everseal can be purchased as individual tubes or as cases of tubes. Prices range from $12-$18 USD per tube, volume dependent. Canadian pricing is typically higher, around $47 CAD per tube.

Q: Where can I find more information on how to order the Branch to Purchase items discussed here?

A: The Falkbuilt Branch to Purchase Manual (page 14) has details on vendor contacts, hardware specifications, pricing, and leadtimes for all behavioral health Branch to Purchase items.

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Q: Does Falkbuilt provide bathroom doors for in-patient (risk level 4 behavioral health spaces?

A: Falkbuilt will provide the required welded door frame for risk level 4 bathrooms, due to the importance of providing matching details and finishes in these spaces. Unlike standard ligature resistant doors, level 4 bathroom doors are, typically, a "saloon door," and are designed to mount to standard welded door frames. Other door types include standard doors with sloped cuts that sit above the floor. These doors provide only partial covering for the opening, to allow for staff supervision.

It may be prudent to leave these door panels in the general contractor's scope during initial projects, and then take these doors into your scope once you have a few projects under your belt.

Q: What other elements for in-patient (level 4) spaces do I need to consider?

A: You may be asked about providing other elements for level 4 behavioral health spaces, such as door stops, millwork, grab bars, clothing hooks, and lighting. It may be prudent to leave these items out of Falkbuilt scope during your first projects, and then take these elements into your scope as you get a few projects under your belt.

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