Category 4: Facilities

> **OPTIONAL**
> **4.14 Practice provides healthier environments using mechanical techniques including at least one (1) option from the following list.**

1-Negatively pressurize ward spaces
- Be prepared to demonstrate via the building mechanical drawings that the patient wards are negatively pressurized, meaning that more air is removed than supplied.

2-Achieve minimum air exchanges for wards
- More air must be exchanged in patient ward spaces than in office areas to comply with accepted animal health standards.
- At a minimum, 10 to 15 air changes per hour are generally required in animal housing areas.
- While this rule of thumb is a good start, using a **cubic foot per minute (CFM)** guideline may be more useful and create a more targeted approach:
    - Isolation wards should be exchanged at 40 CFM per animal.
    - Dog wards need 30 to 35 CFM per animal.
    - Cat cage wards need 35 to 40 CFM per animal.

3-External heat support provided to patients/pets as needed to maintain normothermia
- Radiant heating is used for patient comfort and is not intended to replace building heating systems.
- Radiant heating may be delivered several ways including but not limited to:
    - air or water patient warmers
    - radiant heating pads
    - hydronic or electric heating integrated into the floor slabs
- Radiant heating may be provided to locations including but not limited to:
    - Pre- and post-anesthetic housing
    - ICU/CCU housing
    - Examination, treatment, and surgery tables, including via electric radiant heating integrated with the table
    - If using caging with built-in radiant heating, always separate the animal from direct contact with the heated surface. This can be done with a platform provided by the supplier of the heated cage. Providing this separation will safeguard against the patient overheating.
- For safety reasons, patients who are not awake, alert and/or ambulatory should not have access to radiant heating pads or other plug-in devices.