

# Child Care Licensing Variances



A variance means a temporary exception to a regulation granted by the Commissioner in circumstances when, in his/her judgment, the immediate or literal application of a regulation would result in unnecessary hardship and when the intent of the regulation can be achieved by other means. **Note:** There is specific guidance for submitting record check variances. It can be found at <https://dcf.vermont.gov/childcare/providers/bfis>

## Who can request a variance?

Any licensee, Family Child Care Provider, or program director of a Vermont regulated child care program can request a variance to a specific regulation anytime when there is a hardship and a viable reason for the request.

## How can I submit a variance?

A variance is submitted through your Child Care Program Account in Bright Futures Information System (BFIS). *See opposite side for specific instructions on how to enter into BFIS.*

## What information needs to be in BFIS for variances on qualifications?

For qualification variances, you will need to ensure that all completed education, previous work experience, and IPDP are documented in the individual's BFIS Quality and Credential Account before submitting the variance request. The individual's IPDP should show the individual's educational plan for how the individual will meet qualifications.

## Can I see the variance after it is submitted?

You will be able to see a list of the variances you have submitted and the outcome of the variance. However, you will not be able to see the details of your request. This is why it is important to save all the information you plan to submit prior to pressing "**Submit.**"

## What happens after it is submitted?

Once you have submitted the variance, your licensing field specialist will receive the request and will process the variance for CDD's review and consideration for approval.

## Will I receive a visit from my licensing field specialist?

You may receive an unannounced visit from your licensing field specialist prior to the variance review and decision. In some cases, a visit is not necessary.

## How will I find out if it is approved?

When a decision is made, a "Variance Outcome Letter" is created in BFIS. This letter can be found in your "**Documents**" (BFIS summary page, link at bottom of page). When the document is created, BFIS will send an email to the program. Please be sure to read the Variance Outcome Letter as approved variances often have conditions that are required to be followed.

## How long does the variance last?

Variances are time limited and have expiration dates. This date will be outlined in the Variance Outcome Letter.

## Who can I call if I have questions?

Call 1-800-649-2642 option 3 and division staff will direct your question to the appropriate person.

## What do I do if my variance has been approved?

You may want to notify families, staff, and other agencies, such as the Food Program, that a variance has been approved. For example, if you have been approved to have three infants by yourself, sharing this information is important so that families and others do not think you are out of compliance with ratios.

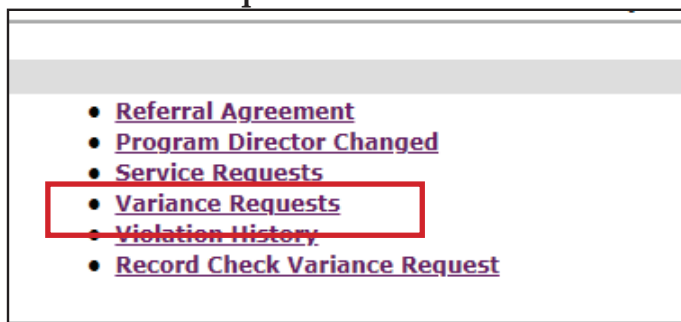


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## Instructions on Entering a Variance in BFIS

1. Log into your Bright Futures Information System (BFIS) Child Care Program Account at <http://brightfutures.dcf.state.vt.us/>
8. Once you have a copy of your information click **"Submit"**

2. Scroll down, and on the bottom right, click **"Variance Requests"**



3. Click **"File a New Variance Request"**
4. Answer the required questions:

A screenshot of a web form titled 'New Variance Request'. The form contains several text input fields and checkboxes. The first field is for 'Regulation Number'. Below it is a checkbox labeled 'Is this a request for a variance?'. The next section is 'Please describe the situation that has led you to request a variance. Please only include information that is relevant to the request and how you are impacted if you do not request a variance.' followed by a large text area. Below that is another checkbox labeled 'Is the variance you are requesting for a child in your care?' followed by another large text area. The form also includes a section for 'Additional information that you believe will support your request' and a final 'Supporting Documentation' section with a file upload area. At the bottom, there are 'Cancel' and 'Continue' buttons.

5. Click **"Continue"**
6. On the second page, you can attach a letter or picture as more information. We recommend you attach a letter with detailed descriptions here. To attach a document click on **"Attach Image"** this will open a new screen. Click **"Browse"** to find the file on your computer. Answer all of the questions and click **"Upload"**
7. Once you have attached all of the letters or images you need, be sure you print or save the information on the screen (you will not have access to this information once it has been submitted).

## Hints and Tricks

- For security reasons BFIS will log you out after 20 minutes if you have not clicked **"Continue"**. We recommend that you type your answers into a separate document, save the document, type "See attached" in each field, and then follow step 6 to attach the document you saved with the answers.
- The fields are limited in the number of letters and spaces allowed. Sometimes you may experience an error if you use special characters in your answers. Please summarize your answers, as you will also be able to attach a letter request on the second page of the variance request.
- The regulation number must match how it appears in the regulation book. For example, you would record 2.1 for the rule in section two that is number one. Be sure your cursor is all the way to the left in the field before typing in your rule number. You can do this by clicking in the field and then tap your backspace key a few times.
- All fields with a red asterisk must have some information in it for the system to allow you to continue to the next page. If you believe that a question may not be applicable for your type of variance, please write that in the field.