- SURVEY TRAINING HANDBOOK for Housekeeping, Laundry and Maintenance Staff

> Your Lifeline for Survey Success



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# About the expert

#### Cindy Frakes, LNHA

Cindy Frakes, LNHA, administrator at Medicalodge Post-Acute Care Center in Kansas City, KS, served as the adviser for this handbook. Frakes has more than 25 years of experience in long-term care and has participated in numerous nursing home surveys.

She has held positions as a certified nursing assistant and worked in medical records and as a regional manager. She has been a licensed nursing home administrator since 1980.

Frakes wishes to thank the dietary, laundry, housekeeping, and maintenance staff of Medicalodge Post-Acute Care Center for their valuable contributions in developing this handbook.



# More than just nursing care—we count on you!

As you know, it takes more than nurses and nursing assistants to run a nursing home. Dietary staff, therapists, activities staff, housekeepers, maintenance personnel, and laundry staff all help make life better for our residents.

Think of the different nursing home departments as spokes on a wheel. It takes all of you to keep that wheel turning and the facility running right. If you think the job you do isn't important, think again. So thank you for all of the hard work you do for our residents.

#### You make a difference

Always keep in mind that one person can make a difference in the lives of our residents. The job you do every day is an important one. You make sure the residents have a clean, safe home. Because of you, our residents have clean socks and towels. You make sure their rooms are clean and the hallways are clutter-free. You do everything from changing a burnt-out

lightbulb so a resident can read in bed to keeping heating systems running and wheelchairs in safe operation.

Without you the nursing staff can't provide the care the residents need. You help to create a home worth living in.

#### We live by a tough set of rules

This nursing home receives state and federal tax money to pay for the care of the residents. Because the government pays for most of the care, it has many rules and regulations that nursing homes must follow.

So who makes sure nursing homes follow the rules? Each year, the state sends out a team of surveyors or inspectors, usually registered nurses, to make sure nursing homes are doing the job right. This annual inspection takes about one week. It will be shorter or longer depending on the size of the facility and what kind of problems the inspectors find.

During this inspection visit, surveyors will watch you do your job and ask you questions. It can be a stressful time, like taking a test with the teacher standing over your shoulder. By being prepared and knowing what to expect, you'll have a better handle on the survey process. Read this handbook and keep it so you can refer back to it as a guide later on.

It is important for a nursing home to do well during a survey. The ultimate goal is to be deficiency- or mistake-free.

#### Where do I fit in?

So how important is the job that housekeepers, laundry staff, and maintenance staff do? Never underestimate yourselves.

Federal regulations require that nursing homes provide a "safe, clean, comfortable, and homelike environment" for their residents. No longer able to live on their own, this nursing home is now home to our residents.

Surveyors will pay lots of attention to a nursing home's "environment." Starting with their initial tour of the facility, surveyors are on the lookout for physical features in the building that affect residents' quality of life, health, and safety.

Surveyors ask themselves questions like this: Do staff follow good infection-control practices, like handwashing? Is equipment functional and clean? Is the place homelike and clean? Are wheelchairs and walkers well-maintained?

Failure to follow housekeeping and maintenance regulations frequently gets nursing homes in survey trouble.

So have no doubt, the job you do is important to survey success and important to the health and safety of our residents. It takes every individual doing his or her job well to make the system run right.



## The survey process in a nutshell

When they come to this nursing home, state surveyors must follow a detailed process for conducting their inspection.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) writes and enforces nursing home regulations. This federal agency contracts with the states to conduct nursing home surveys. Nursing home staff have no advance notice that surveyors are coming. Surveyors can arrive at this nursing home at any time, including weekends and nights.

#### ✓ How surveyors prepare for a visit

Before surveyors even arrive at this nursing home's door, the members of the survey team have prepared for their visit. They know a great deal about the facility and its residents.

How is that the case? In what is called their off-site survey preparation, the survey team has reviewed reports about the facility, its residents, and the care they need. This review allows surveyors to identify issues that may be problems in the facility and select residents they will review. For example, do many residents have pressure sores or suffer from weight loss? Surveyors will then focus on residents with those problems.

#### ✓ Initial tour and on-site preparation

All that preparation means that surveyors are ready to begin the survey immediately after they enter the facility. They will take an initial tour of the nursing home, getting their first look

at the facility, the residents, and the staff. This tour also includes a first brief look at the facility's kitchen.

In evaluating this facility, surveyors will focus on residents' grooming, dress, and hygiene and how staff members interact with residents. They will look for good infection control practices such as regular handwashing, clean liness of equipment, and a safe environment. It is always important to give a good first impression to surveyors. Be professional and do your job as best you know how.

#### **R**esident interview

During the survey, the inspectors will talk to residents about what it is like to live in the nursing home.

As part of the interview, surveyors will assess the facility environment. Surveyors will ask residents questions such as: Do staff members try to make the facility seem homelike? Is it quiet or noisy? Is the facility clean and free of bad smells?

Surveyors also want to know how residents feel about staff members at the facility. They may ask residents questions such as: Do the staff members treat you with respect? Do you feel they know something about you as a person? Has a staff member ever yelled or sworn at you? Do staff respect your privacy?

#### **G**roup interview

During the survey, surveyors will also talk with members of the resident council if one exists, or with an informal group of residents. Again, surveyors want to know about life in the

facility and the interactions of residents and staff.

### ✓ Family/friend interview

If surveyors cannot interview a resident (perhaps because he or she cannot understand the questions), the surveyors will try to interview a family member, friend, or guardian who acts on behalf of the resident and authorizes care.

#### **V** Observations and citations

Throughout the survey, the survey team will observe what goes on in the facility. Surveyors will then determine the facility's compliance with the regulations based on the information gathered during the survey.

At an exit conference, the surveyors will meet with the nursing home administration and report any mistakes or deficiencies they found.



# When surveyors ask, how should you answer?

As part of their inspection, you can expect that surveyors will ask staff members (maybe even you) questions. Although questions from a surveyor can be scary, remember to stay calm and answer truthfully.



Be prepared to answer the following questions during a survey:

- What would you do in case of a fire?
- What would you do if you saw or heard someone abusing a resident? Examples of hearing possible abuse might be hearing an argument, foul words, a slapping sound, or a resident crying out.
- What can you tell me about your nursing home's quality assessment and improvement program?
- How do you know what your nursing home's policies are? Policies and procedures refer to the rules and instructions you are given in how to do your job right.

For housekeepers, surveyors may ask about policies on how you mix your mop water, how often you change that water, and how you keep chemicals away from residents.

For laundry staff, surveyors may ask how much laundry you can wash in one machine at one time, how you handle clean ©2002 Opus Communications, a division of HCPro. Unauthorized duplication is prohibited.

and dirty linen, and how hot wash water needs to be.

Keep these tips in mind when talking to surveyors:



- Don't give more information than is asked for. Just answer the question. Don't rattle on out of fear that you don't know the answer. If a surveyor asks a specific question about a resident's room or laundry, for instance, answer that question. Don't take it as an invitation to talk about everything you know about that resident's care.
- This is not the time to mention complaints about the facility. You don't want to blame other people or departments for a problem the surveyor is concerned about. Let surveyors find problems themselves.
- Talk to the surveyor just like you would talk to any important visitor. Be kind, professional, and use appropriate language.

And what should you do if you don't know the answer to a surveyor's question? Or if you "go blank?"

If you don't know the information, don't guess. Don't make it up. Don't "wing it." That can create problems. If you don't understand the surveyor's question, say so. Tell the surveyor you don't understand and that you are going to get your supervisor for help.

It's okay to say, "I'm not sure, but I can find out for you." Go get a supervisor for help. You need to find out the answer from someone who knows.

# R-E-S-P-E-C-T re<mark>sident rights</mark>



Comedian Rodney Dangerfield has complained for years: "I don't get no respect." But that's one complaint you don't ever want to hear from one of your nursing home residents. Protecting every resident's rights

and dignity is a top priority of this nursing home. Surveyors are constantly listening and observing to see how you and other staff members treat the residents. So follow these tips to protect resident rights:

- Stop and take time to listen to what each resident wants. Let the resident make choices.
- Don't discuss a resident's medical, social, or financial matters with people who are not involved in his or her care. Don't hold such conversations where others can overhear.
- Protect every resident's privacy. Pull curtains or close doors to protect privacy.
- Always knock and identify yourself before entering a resident's room and then wait for a response.
- Introduce yourself to the resident.
- Talk to your residents while working with or near them. Surveyors don't want to see staff members talking to each other and ignoring the residents.

- Sit down when feeding or assisting residents and talk to them.
- Always address each resident by his or her preferred name.
   Don't use nicknames or call a resident "honey," or "darling" unless the resident asks to be addressed that way.
- Clean up the resident's hands and face after meals. Be sure there are no stains on clothing after meals.
- Clean up spills on tables and floors after meals.
- Be sure to address the concerns of any resident who is yelling out. Don't ignore the resident.
- Serve everyone at the same table in your dining room at the same time. No one should sit and watch others eat.
- Don't change the radio or television station without the resident's permission and make sure it's tuned to a channel he or she enjoys.
- Speak respectfully. Don't shout or use foul language.
- Don't borrow one resident's things for use by another resident.
- Don't help yourself to residents' personal items, such as taking candy or using their telephone. If you see someone else doing this tell that person to stop and let your supervisor know.

# Safety first

You can help protect the safety of residents and everyone in the facility by knowing how to react in an emergency. Often surveyors will ask staff members questions about disaster and emergency procedures. Know the facility's evacuation, fire procedure, and disaster plans. Know your role in the event of disaster.

In a fire, remember **RACE:** 

Re	scue
A	arm
Co	ontain
Ex	tinguish

When using a fire extinguisher, remember **PASS**:



Pull the pin Aim at the base of the fire Squeeze the handle Sweep side to side

Safety rules protect you and the residents. Follow them.

Your facility will instruct you on how to lift safely to prevent back or other injuries. Use good lifting habits with all loads, large and small.



## Mom was right, wash your hands

What's the single biggest way to help ensure that infections don't spread within this nursing home?

It's handwashing. You can expect surveyors to take a close look at infection control practices, including whether you and other staff members regularly wash their hands.

Remember to wash your hands before and after caring for each resident!

It's also important to wash your hands as a matter of personnel hygiene. So don't forget to wash your hands after touching uncooked food, eating food, using the bathroom, petting animals, touching garbage, sneezing or coughing into your hands, or whenever in doubt. If you use the phone, wash your hands!

Dietary staff must remember to wash their hands each time they enter the kitchen—before they do anything else! Laundry and housekeeping staff should wash their hands each time they handle soiled laundry or remove gloves.

The regulations require handwashing and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) says proper handwashing is the single most important procedure for preventing infections.

Follow these guidelines:

Wash your hands for at least 15 seconds, vigorously rubbing together the lathered surfaces. Pay particular attention to your fingernails and between your fingers. Thoroughly rinse your hands under a stream of warm water. Use a paper towel to turn off the faucet.

The government also recommends that health care workers have short, natural fingernails and that they not wear fake press-on nails. Long fingernails can harbor bacteria.

# Gloves help protect you and the residents

You wear gloves to protect both yourself and the residents you work with.

When it comes to glove use, keep in mind:

- Use gloves whenever you may come in contact with bodily fluids including blood and urine.
- Don't wear gloves in the hallways. Remove gloves and throw them in the trash before walking out in the hallway.
- Change your gloves between caring for residents.
- Wash your hands whenever you remove your gloves.
- Don't touch barrels, door knobs, faucets, or residents' personal items with dirty gloves on.

Remember, gloves don't replace handwashing!



# Stop resident abuse in its tracks

You, this facility, and the government want to make sure every nursing home

does all it can to protect residents from abuse and neglect.

That's why this nursing home has a zero-tolerance policy that prohibits the neglect and abuse of residents and the theft or use of a resident's personal possessions without his or her permission.

Residents have the right to be free from any verbal, sexual, physical, and mental abuse. No one should abuse a resident—including friends, family members, guardians, visitors, other residents, volunteers, consultants, agency people providing resident services—nobody!

If you see any incident of resident abuse, report it immediately to your supervisor. If you see or hear something that makes you uncomfortable, don't try to decide on your own whether it was abuse. Let your supervisor take that responsibility off your shoulders. It's better to be safe than sorry.

What is abuse? It can be physical, such as hitting, slapping, pinching, or kicking. Verbal abuse includes threats of harm, saying things to frighten a resident, or using disciplinary, rude, insulting, or foul language. Mental abuse includes humiliation, harassment, or threats of punishment, like saying to a resident, "If you don't stop that I'll take your call light away."

Caregivers must never use cruel or mean language, roughly handle a resident, or ignore a resident while giving care.

Neglect can be harder to define. If a staff member's failure to do something can cause a resident to get sick, it may be neglect. Not cleaning a resident's room, not giving a resident the right kind of diet, or not giving a resident his or her medicine may also be neglect.

You can expect surveyors to ask staff members questions about how this facility protects residents from abuse. Be prepared to answer the following questions:

- What would you do if you saw another person being abusive to a resident?
- How would you deal with an aggressive resident?
- Do you know the signs of burnout, frustration, and stress that may lead to abuse?

Surveyors will ask these questions to find out how this nursing home trains and encourages you and other staff members to let someone know whether they or another person needs a break or additional training so they can handle the daily stress of the job. We all know it can be very emotionally and physically challenging to take care of people. A supervisor may change the job assignment of a staff member for a while to give him or her a break, talk about what to do when someone is very stressed, or give extra training in how to handle tough situations.

# What the regulations mean to you

It is important that you know how the regulations affect your job duties at this nursing home.



#### Housekeeping/maintenance

#### Environment—Quality of life

Yes, this is a nursing home, but surveyors expect to see a homelike environment. Surveyors will look for personal items in residents' rooms such as family photographs, books and magazines, bedspreads, knickknacks, mementos, and furniture.

When you go into a resident's room, can you learn something about his or her everyday life and interests? Are there signs of who the resident was prior to coming to the nursing home? Do staff respect the resident's personal property?

Facilities must provide effective housekeeping and maintenance services. Surveyors will check to see that resident care equipment is clean and properly stored. The facility must be uncluttered, neat, and well-kept.

Surveyors will also check to see that residents have individual closet space with accessible shelves and that facilities have enough light, safe temperatures (in the range of 71–81 degrees), and comfortable sound levels—particularly at night.



Tips: Don't leave personal items on sink tops. Mark per-

sonal items and be sure they are put away. Keep resident rooms uncluttered and in good repair so residents and staff can work without tripping or having to move around obstacles.

Make sure trash barrels are emptied and covered. Be sure that bedside commodes are emptied and cleaned. Keep residents' rooms clean and free of dirty linen. Store away any urinals/bed pans, and be sure that beds are made.

Save yourself grief by listening and responding to any resident complaints about their environment long before your survey.

#### Preventing accidents

Staff must ensure that the facility is as free of accident hazards as possible. This is the second most frequently cited deficiency in nursing homes across the country. Housekeeping and maintenance staff can play an important role in protecting residents by preventing accidents.

For instance, staff must be sure to maintain resident equipment in good condition. Check the brakes on wheelchairs and geri-chairs. Check walkers for loose nuts and bolts. Make sure bathing facilities have nonslip surfaces to prevent falls. Eliminate hazards such as electrical appliances with frayed wires and cleaning supplies that are easily accessible to cognitively impaired residents. Be sure to put up signs when floors are wet and block access. Make sure handrails are securely fixed to the walls, easy for residents to grasp, and without any sharp edges or splinters. Keep water tempera-

tures in hand sinks and bathtubs low enough that they don't scald residents.



**Tips:** Keep resident wheelchairs clean from dirt and food, and ensure that they are kept in good repair.

Also, make sure halls are free of excess wheelchairs and that you clean up any spills right away. Keep tools, carts, and supplies away from residents to prevent serious harm. Many residents have limited eyesight and cannot see tripping hazards or read caution labels on products.

#### Physical environment

Surveyors will check to see that essential equipment, such as the boiler room equipment, nursing unit/medication room refrigerators, kitchen refrigerators/freezers, and laundry equipment is in safe operating condition. Be sure you maintain this equipment according to the manufacturers' recommendations.

Surveyors will also check to make sure residents have clean and comfortable mattresses and bedding that is appropriate to the weather and climate.

Surveyors will want to see that staff test the emergency power system periodically. Remember to test batteries for any battery-operated lighting to ensure they work.

Also, keep all portions of the resident call system working so that residents, when in their rooms and toilet/bathing areas, can contact staff at the nurses' station. Be sure that the system is not turned off at the nurses' station, the volume is not too low

to be heard, and the call light above every room works.

#### Other environmental conditions

The facility needs to take measures to kill common household pests such as roaches, ants, mosquitoes, flies, mice, and rats. Surveyors will look for signs of any pest infestation.

Surveyors will also want to make sure there is good ventilation in the building with acceptable temperature, humidity, and odor levels.



#### Laundry

#### Personal possessions

Make sure you return residents' personal clothes. Let your supervisor know about unmarked items as quickly as possible. Show special concern for quilts, bedspreads, or other items that may have sentimental value to residents. Remember, people who live in nursing homes give up a lot when they must move out of their own homes. Special dresses, quilts, and even their own socks make this nursing center their home.

#### Linens

Bed and bath linens must be in good condition. Staff should not use sheets, towels, and washcloths that are in poor condition. Take items that are frayed, thin, ripped, or torn to your supervisor so that the facility can replace them when it orders new supplies. Make sure there are enough bed and bath linens available for each resident.

Expect surveyors to focus on the appearance of residents. Resident clothing should also be in good condition. Be sure there are no buttons missing, no broken zippers, and no rips or holes.

#### Proper handling

Staff need to handle, process, and transport linens so as to prevent the spread of infection. Staff need to handle soiled linens to contain and minimize exposure to any waste products. Keep soiled and clean linens separated in the laundry room. Follow these guidelines:

- Keep lids on barrels and close bags of dirty laundry.
- Bag soiled linen and clothing before carrying it down the hall.
- Place dirty linens in a bag on the chair, not on the floor.
- Keep dirty linens and clothing away from your uniform.
- Don't take clean linen from one resident's room into another room.
- Don't leave dirty linen in a resident's bathroom.
- Keep linen carts covered.
- Don't eat or drink in clean or soiled linen areas. You risk exposing yourself or someone else to germs.
- Be careful to use chemicals according to their instructions and always wear safety gear when handling liquid chemicals. Safe use keeps you from being hurt and extends the life of the linen.



#### Infection control

You have a role to play in infection control. Be

sure you know about the facility's infection control program and stay up-to-date on any changes. Follow facility policies for handwashing, wearing gloves, when to use masks and gowns, linen handling, housekeeping, needle and hazardous waste disposal, as well as other ways to limit the spread of diseases.

Properly use disinfectants, antiseptics, and germicides according to the manufacturers' instructions to avoid harm to staff, residents, and visitors and to ensure effectiveness. Always sanitize tubs, showers, whirlpools, and multiple-use equipment according to manufacturers' recommendations. Follow the facility policy for disposing of infectious waste.

**Tips:** Surveyors will check whether staff, including kitchen staff and housekeeping, use gloves properly. If you go into any area where a resident is isolated because of a contagious illness, use proper isolation techniques such as gloves, gowns, or hair-coverings.

Maintenance staff should check air-handling equipment periodically to ensure that it functions properly. Improper airflow could spread potentially contagious diseases.

Editor's note: If you want to read the actual regulations, ask your supervisor for a copy of CMS' State Operations Manual. You'll find the regulations, intent, surveyor guidelines, and probes surveyors will use.



# Why survey results matter to you and this nursing home

#### Your team's 'report card'

As you now know, it's always important for a nursing home to do well during a survey. Every nursing home wants to be mistake-free.

If the surveyors find this facility has not followed a certain rule, they will give the nursing home a written list of deficiencies. The surveyors send this list of mistakes to the state and federal government in the form of a report card explaining what was found. This report card also tells the public how well we all do our jobs.

When surveyors find deficiencies, the nursing home must say how and when staff will fix the mistakes that were made and prevent them from happening again.

This facility has a quality improvement program. Your ideas to fix mistakes are an important part of this program. Ask your supervisor who is on the quality improvement team, and give them your ideas.

#### Getting to know you, getting to know all about you

So how did this nursing home do during its last survey? The

public is hungry for information about nursing homes. Who, they wonder, will provide the best care for their mother or grandfather?

CMS provides information about your facility, including a summary of the results from your last survey, on its Web site.

You want the data to paint the right picture and to compare favorably with other nursing homes in your area. The job you do and the care you provide helps paint that picture. Go to the Nursing Home Compare Web site at *www.medicare.gov/ nhcompare/home.asp* to check out the information that CMS includes about this facility.

#### Frequency of surveys

All nursing homes face a state survey at least once every nine to 15 months and sometimes more frequently. The most common survey is the annual survey, which your facility must pass.

Surveyors will come to a nursing home more often if surveyors uncover serious mistakes or if a facility has a poor survey history. A complaint about the facility or its staff from a resident, family member, or other person can also result in an investigation.

Keep in mind, it's always important to be survey-ready. Do things according to the rules. If you don't understand or know these rules, don't be afraid to ask your supervisor or the administrator for help. There are no dumb questions. There are more than 500 rules to try to follow and understand.



# What the heck are they talking about?

If you've never worked in long-term care before, during your first few days on the job you might have thought you landed on a different planet. CMS. MDS. QIs. What's everybody talking about?

Here's a little dictionary to help you interpret the language of long-term care.

**CMS**—The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), formerly known as the Health Care Financing Administration. This federal agency administers the Medicare and Medicaid programs. CMS writes and enforces the federal regulations that govern nursing home care.

**Survey**—CMS contracts with state agencies to conduct nursing home inspections or surveys to see whether facilities are following its regulations. State surveyors or inspectors do a yearly inspection of all long-term care facilities before renewing the facility's license. A nursing home cannot operate without a license.

**Survey team**—Also called surveyors or inspectors. The team consists of nurses, dietitians, sanitarians, and others who inspect the facility.

**Deficiencies**—When a nursing home fails to meet a federal requirement, surveyors cite that home with a violation or deficiency. When there are no violations found, the facility is "deficiency-free."

**F-Tag**—This is the term that corresponds to a specific federal requirement that nursing homes must meet. For example, the regulation for providing therapeutic diets is Tag # F326.

**MDS** assessment—MDS stands for Minimum Data Set. This is the detailed form that nursing home staff must use to assess a resident's problems and needs. It is key to Medicare reimbursement and a critical part of the state survey process. Information on the MDS is the basis for a facility's quality indicators or QIs.

**Quality indicators**—Also known as QIs. Currently, CMS identifies 24 QIs or specific areas of resident care used to judge the quality of nursing homes. Surveyors use a facility's QI data to focus on potential problems and identify residents for review. For instance, the QIs tell surveyors how many residents in a nursing home have pressure sores or how many have unexpected weight losses—factors that can indicate problems with their care.

**State Operations Manual**—Also called the *SOM*. Published by CMS, this manual contains the guidelines for conducting surveys and the regulations nursing homes must follow.

**Quality improvement**—Also called quality assurance. Regulations require each nursing home to have a quality assessment and assurance committee to identify problems and come up with plans to correct deficiencies.

**JCAHO**—The Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations. Some nursing homes choose to undergo an accreditation survey by this independent, not-for-profit organization that evaluates and accredits health care organizations. A JCAHO survey is separate from a state survey and is conducted by surveyors who work for the Joint Commission.

		Pop quiz
	0.	stions relate to the survey handbook you have espond to the questions below to the best of your
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# Answer key

- 1. True
- 2. False
- 3. Always knock on the door
- 4. True
- 5. False
- 6. RACE = Rescue, Alarm, Contain, Extinguish
- 7. True
- 8. False
- 9. Handwashing
- 10. False

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