

Long-Term Care Survey Alert

Survey Management Tips: Don't Get Tripped Up During Your Next Survey: Simple Tips Help You Avoid Missteps

Orient surveyors to your EMR but make sure these safeguards are in place.

Ever had that sinking realization that you've lost control of a survey? A few strategies can help prevent that from happening.

Marie Saunders, RN, BSN, BC, strongly recommends that facility managers stay with surveyors during the survey as much as they permit. "That way you can identify what they seem to be concerned about." Also "work very hard to get daily exit interviews with the surveyors," adds Saunders, a consultant and software developer in Appleton, Wis.

Another must: Facilities should have an alert system to notify the director of nursing and other staff to come to the facility when surveyors arrive during off hours, advises Saunders. "The surveyors may come from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., and then two will come back at midnight, for example."

Keep in mind: Surveyors may get "cranky" right off the bat if they find your documentation system is a "confused jumble of paper that they can't get through," Saunders cautions.

Solution: Strive for well-organized charts or an electronic medical record, she advises. If you have an EMR, however, "work with the surveyors long enough so they know where they need to go in the record." And make sure the software is set up to prevent surveyors from looking at records that they shouldn't access, such as your incident reports and QA committee notes, she adds.