

Long-Term Care Survey Alert

Survey Preparation: What To Say When Surveyors Call You On The Carpet

Staff should know how to answer surveyors' questions without burying the facility under a pile of F tags.

To coach staff on the do's and don'ts in this critical area, use these survey preparation tips, compliments of **Jerry Lynn Ward, JD**, with Garlo Ward, in Austin, TX.

What You Don't Want To Do:

1. Don't speak from memory. Tell the surveyor you want to refresh your memory by looking at the resident's chart before answering.
2. Don't blame anyone else. Don't say, "I told her, but she didn't do anything." Don't say, "We're short-handed, short staffed, we don't have enough time, or we don't have enough help."
3. Avoid using generalizations such as "never," "ever," "always," "all," "none," etc. It's OK to say: "I don't know off the top of my head. Let me check ___ (medical records, policies)" or "the best person to answer that question is ___," rather than guessing at an answer.

How to Handle Questions:

4. Ask the surveyor to clarify a question if you're unsure of what it means. Don't guess the meaning of a question.
5. Answer only the question asked. Do not feel compelled to give more than the surveyor requested.
6. If you're not qualified by license or experience to answer, tell the surveyor so. Refer them to the person who can answer the question.