

MDS Alert

Reader Question: Does Revised F323 Fall Definition Trump MDS Coding Instructions?

Question: We've noted that the recently released F323 survey guidance includes a definition of falls that excludes incidents where the resident falls because someone pushed him. So we're wondering if we should still code that type of incident as a fall in Section J.

Missouri subscriber

Answer: There isn't any official guidance on this, notes **Rena Shephard, RN, RAC-MT, MHA, FACDONA**. A similar question has come up in the past as to whether to code a resident being hit by a car as a fall, she notes. Shephard thus thinks that a resident being pushed by another person falls into the same category and would not be considered to be a fall for purposes of coding the MDS.

Yet "the State Operations Manual guidance to surveyors ... and other resources cannot be applied to MDS coding rules," Shephard adds. "The RAI User's Manual contains the only official instructions for MDS coding. In the absence of official word on this, the best advice is for an individual facility to contact the state RAI coordinator and do whatever that person says."

Rena Shephard is president of **RRS Healthcare Consulting** in San Diego and founding chair and executive editor of the **American Association of Nurse Assessment Coordinators**.