

Tips for Ensuring Compliance with Commonly Cited F-Tags

LeadingAge recently conducted an analysis of state survey citations so far in 2021 and offered some tips on how to ensure compliance in these areas.* They are presented here in order of their frequency of citation.

F-884: Reporting - National Health Safety Network (NHSN)

Ensure that your data is reported, review policies/procedures for reporting, and always have a backup team member who can enter data in a timely manner.

F-880: Infection Prevention and Control

Team members should demonstrate infection control procedures, as well as state to a surveyor how your organization is following practices for hand hygiene and donning/doffing PPE. Additionally, review and document your monitoring and practices around preventing infection spread, listing key tools used by your infection preventionist.

F-886: COVID-19 Testing - Residents & Staff

Double-check who is monitoring community positivity rates. Make sure there is a backup team member to handle this as needed. Verify lab turnaround times and document if they are over 48 hours. Use audit tools with monitoring criteria to help stay in compliance.

F-689: Free of Accident Hazards/Supervision/Devices

Use a systems approach to identify hazards, including inadequate supervision. Implement resident-centered approaches to hazard prevention, engaging all staff, residents and families. Promote ongoing discussion and input on resident safety; and monitor data related to care processes that lead to accidents.

F-684: Quality of Care

Review care plans and documentation; ensure they are resident centered. Have a fluid clinical assessment process and ensure staff are completing ongoing clinical assessments and identifying condition changes promptly. Establish a performance improvement plan that includes a communication link and documentation monitoring. Make sure to include residents and/or resident representatives in care plans.



F-580: Notify of Changes (Injury/Decline/Room, etc)

During an outbreak, residents must be transferred or discharged due to positive cases. Make sure you are documenting these events and alerting residents and/or their representatives about why these decisions are being made. Make sure your resident records have up-to-date contact email addresses, mailing addresses, and phone numbers for representatives.

F-883: Influenza & Pneumococcal Immunizations

Documentation is key here! Your organization/facility must offer vaccines to all residents and educate them about the shot and its side effects. While residents or their representatives have the right/opportunity to refuse, these refusals must be documented in the resident record.

F-885: Reporting-Residents, Representatives & Families

Make sure you have an ongoing and updated policy/procedure for informing residents, representatives, families, and staff that includes timeframes. Establish a process for how communication will be completed, who will be responsible for it, and who is the backup. Identify the different modes of communication you will use (electronic, phone calls, etc) and how. Ensure that staff can relate this process in some detail to surveyors.

F-686: Treatment/Services to Prevent/Heal Pressure Ulcers

Documentation is essential for compliance with this tag. This should include answers to questions such as: Is the pressure ulcer avoidable or unavoidable? Did the team communicate skin integrity and risk factors to avoid pressure ulcers? Is the staging of the wound accurate?

F-609: Reporting of Alleged Violations

Review staff knowledge of reporting processes regarding alleged violations to residents. Make sure they know who to report to and the timeframe, as well as what documentation they are required to complete and what details to include.

While there is specific guidance for each tag, communication and documentation are common themes. It is helpful to review and test processes and procedures over time. Check-ups and refresher in-services can go a long way to help ensure compliance.

* <https://leadingage.org/regulation/top-10-survey-citations-march-2021>

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