Residential Care Services (RCS)  
Operational Principles and Procedures for  
Assisted Living Facilities (ALFs)  
FULL INSPECTION  

GENERAL GUIDELINES  

I. Purpose  
To provide staff with consistent direction for conducting full inspections in assisted living facilities (ALFs).  

II. Authority  

RCW 18.20.110  
RCW 18.20.125  
RCW 70.129  

III. Operational Principles  
A. The health, safety, well-being and quality of life of vulnerable adults have always been and will continue to be the paramount concern in determining whether to take licensing/enforcement action.  
B. Assisted living facilities licensed by Residential Care Services (RCS) will be inspected at least every 18 months with a statewide average of 15 months, except that:  
   1. RCS may delay a full inspection to 24 months if the ALF has:  
      a. Been deficiency free for three consecutive full inspections, and  
      b. Received no deficiencies during the same time for any other inspections/visits, including complaint investigations.  

   NOTE: The Field Manager has authority to require early inspections if problems are identified.  
C. Assisted living facilities will:  
   1. Meet, and always be in compliance with, the applicable minimum licensing requirements.  
   2. Deliver quality care to residents in order to meet the requirements.  

IV. Procedures  
THE LICENSOR WILL:  
A. Follow the written inspection principles and procedures and forms to ensure that inspections are done in a consistent manner and focus primarily on actual or potential resident outcomes.  
B. Use observations and interviews to determine the facility’s compliance with the licensing laws and rules. Begin making ongoing general observations, starting with the entrance, during the tour and throughout the entire inspection.  
C. Use record reviews to validate concerns and issues identified by observation and interviews.
D. Utilize outside information collected off-site from the last date on-site to
determine and support deficient practice. Field staff will not collect information
off-site unless necessary to determine and support non-compliance. If
necessary to determine and support non-compliance, collect the information as
soon as possible.

E. Consult and clearly communicate general observations and/or concerns with
the administrator/staff throughout the inspection. The licensor's communication
with the ALF must not include issues that if communicated would impede the
ability to determine failed practice.

F. Share information with other licensors on the team regarding issues or
concerns identified during various stages of the inspection.

G. Collect further data from interviews, more observations and/or record review to
support or invalidate an issue. An observation alone does not always confirm
or disprove a deficient practice.

H. Continue to tell applicants and administrators when they are in compliance with
the regulations and when they have not met the requirements. The licensor
may also tell administrators if something that they plan to do would appear to
help them meet the regulations or not.

I. Not provide technical assistance or best practice information on how to
implement the regulations or correct the deficiencies.

J. Discard ALF inspection OPP and forms dated prior to the most current
approved versions posted to the RCS intranet

K. Use the following Inspection OPPs:
   1. Pre-Inspection Preparation
   2. Entrance
   3. Tour
   4. Resident Group Meeting
   5. Resident Sample
   6. Interviews
   7. Observation of Care
   8. Abuse Prevention Review
   9. Medication Service
   10. Environmental Observations
   11. Food Service
   12. Resident Record Review
   13. Facility Staff Sample/Record Review
   14. Exit Preparation
   15. Exit
   16. Revisit (if needed)

V. Information and Assistance
   A. Inspection:
1. The inspection is unannounced, therefore the licensor will not disclose the planned date of the inspection to anyone except the fire marshal; and
2. Licensors will attempt to minimize the disruption of the resident and/or ALF routines during the Inspection.

B. Dress and behavior:
   1. Dress professionally; and
   2. Communicate with the administrator, staff, Ombuds, resident families and residents in a courteous and respectful manner.

C. Data collection:
   1. Data collection during inspections consists of observations, interviews, and record reviews and is:
      a. Collected in a factual and objective manner;
      b. Not affected by assumptions and personal opinions
   2. Timeliness of data collection:
      a. Collect data based on interview and observations as quickly as possible.
      b. Collect data to support decision making for findings which could result in citations and enforcement.
      c. Delay in data collection may negatively impact the department’s ability to cite or do enforcement.

D. Resident rights:
   1. Monitor staff and residents throughout the inspection for resident rights including:
      a. Right to refuse,
      b. Choice,
      c. Dignity,
      d. Quality of life,
      e. Communication,
      f. Behaviors,
      g. Timeliness, and
      h. Identified needs being met.

E. Observations:
   1. Are an important part of data collection;
   2. Are critical to either substantiate or rule out information obtained through record review and/or interview;
   3. Generally require the gathering of additional information from more observations, from interviews and/or record review to clarify or verify;
   4. By themselves, do not always support a failed practice issue or concern.

F. Contact the Field Manager for guidance when situations occur during the inspection:
   1. When something occurs that will likely extend the timeframe of the licensing visit
   2. If something has come up and you are not sure of how to proceed;
   3. If immediate enforcement may be needed;
4. If a nurse is needed for some aspect of the inspection, and there is no nurse on the team.
5. If someone is impeding the inspection.
6. If residents appear alone in the ALF, or if no one is in the ALF.

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Date