



Quality of Life and Environment Tag Changes – July 2009

The following information is from slides presented by Karen Schoeneman, Deputy Director, CMS Division of Nursing Homes in July of 2009. View the official guidance document at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/transmittals/downloads/R48SOMA.pdf>.

F172 Access and Visitation Rights

- Adds guidance that facilities must provide 24-hour access to any visitor who is visiting with consent of resident.
- “Reasonable restrictions” regulatory language is defined as those restrictions that keep the home’s residents safe
 - Keeping home locked at night
 - Restricting persons who are disruptive
 - Providing alternate locations for visits (other than bedroom) in order to minimize disruptions to roommate

The right to reasonable restrictions does not include limiting visiting hours

F175 Married Couples

- Permissive sentence added that this regulation does not prohibit the home from accommodating residents who wish to room with a person of their choice.
- Refers surveyors to F242 Self-determination and Participation for right to make choices.

F241 Dignity

- Dignity is global, is of utmost importance, and one of the most key Tags in the entire book
- Surveyors are directed to ADL tags for cleanliness issues and to use 241 for grooming style issues
- Key changes in language include:
 - Discouraging use of hospital gowns
 - Refraining from using bibs
 - Avoiding the use of labels for residents such as “feeders”
- Guidance has been added on:
 - Use of signage in bedrooms and where public can view
 - Keeping residents covered while in public
 - Not restricting residents from restrooms in common areas
 - Exceptions for certain tiny restrooms and for certain residents

F242 Self-Determination and Participation

- The regulation has always contained rights to make choices over:
 - Activities
 - Schedules
 - Health care
 - Interactions with members of the community
 - Aspects of his or her life that are significant to the resident
 - Surveyors are directed to F248 for activity choices
- Choices over schedules is specified to include schedules of waking, eating, bathing, and going to bed at night, as well as health care schedules

- Language is added regarding the right to make choices over matters that are significant, that one example is choosing to room with a person of the resident's choice
- This echoes the language written at Tag 175 Married Couples that directs surveyors to F242 for issues regarding this choice of roommate. F175 only covers spouses.

F246 Accommodation of Needs

- This Tag's focus should be on the physical environment
 - Bedroom, bathroom plus some degree of individualization in common areas
- Language added that facility should be accommodating NEEDS and preferences
 - Facility needs to assess both needs and preferences of each resident and accommodate to extent reasonable, so long as the roommate is taken into account too
- Specifics provided about individualizing the bedroom and bathroom to assist resident to:
 - Open/close drawers, turn faucets on/off
 - See self in bathroom mirror, have toiletries at hand
 - Open/close doors, operate room lighting
 - Use bathroom facilities (access grab bars, etc.)
 - Other – use call bell, turn table light on/off
 - Have sufficient electrical outlets, comfortable seating, task lighting, furniture arrangement

F247 Room/Roommate Change

- Reg. language: Receive notice before the resident's room or roommate in the facility is changed.
- Guidance added to make this more specific and to encourage home to be sensitive to resident needs when moving to a new room or getting a new roommate

F252 Environment

- Text is added to explain intent of the word "homelike" in the reg. language – close to that of the environment of a private home as possible, eliminating odors and institutional practices as much as possible
- Institutional practices that homes should strive to eliminate
 - – Overhead paging (this language has been there since 1990)
 - – Meals served on trays in dining room
 - – Institutional signage labeling rooms
 - – Medication carts
 - – Widespread use of audible seat and bed alarms
 - – Mass purchased furniture
 - – Nursing stations
- Most homes can't eliminate these quickly, this is a goal rather than a regulatory mandate
- Part of creating a homelike environment is emphasizing individualization, relationships, and a welcoming atmosphere that makes residents comfortable
- Homes where residents stay a short time would also benefit from elimination of institutional practices. These residents will not likely want to bring in major furniture items but may want their TV, chair, etc.

F256 Lighting

- Reg. language addresses both adequate and comfortable lighting “levels of illumination suitable to tasks the resident chooses to perform or the facility staff must perform.
- “minimizing glare, providing maximum resident control over light intensity, location, and direction of illumination to enable residents with visual impairment to maintain or enhance independent functioning”
- Guidance describes features of adequate lighting design
- More features of adequate lighting design:
 - Extra lighting available for tasks – table or floor lamps
 - Wayfinding light to help residents find their way to their bathroom at night
 - Dimmers where possible and where resident desires them gives more control over light level
 - Staff can also use them for care at night
 - Some homes cannot make lighting changes due to voltage or wiring issues
- Guidance also addresses additional issues of helping residents to see better
 - Contrasting colors between
 - Floor/baseboard
 - Bathroom fixtures/walls
 - Dishes/table

F371 Sanitary Conditions

- Recent release of new guidance at this Tag has caused some questions about residents accepting food from visitors
- We are revising a sentence at this Tag to make it clear that this reg. concerns facility procurement and does not limit the rights of residents to accept food from visitors.

F371 S&C Letter

- “Foods accepted by residents from visitors, family, friends or other guests are not subject to the regulatory requirement at F 371; and
- Residents have the right to choose to accept food from visitors, family, friends or other guests according to their rights to make choices at §483.15 F 242 Self Determination and Participation.”

F461 Resident Rooms

- Language from LSC added for windows
 - Sill height not to exceed 36 inches
 - Window may be operable
- Floor at grade level clarified
- Closet reg. language from 483.15, F255 brought to this Tag and F255 deleted

F463 Call System

- Language has been added to address homes that do not have nursing stations and homes that use wireless systems