

CHARLIE CRIST  
GOVERNOR



THOMAS W. ARNOLD  
SECRETARY

Agency for Health Care Administration  
Monitoring of Hospital and Nursing Home Food Service Operations

- The Agency maintains the authority to conduct routine and complaint inspections of nursing homes and hospitals which includes food service operations.
- Nursing homes and hospitals are required to ensure that food is prepared, distributed and stored in a safe and sanitary manner.
- The inspection process includes staff interviews, resident/patient interviews as appropriate, record reviews and observation of the food preparation, distribution and storage of food.
- Among the items included in the inspection process is the cleanliness and sanitation of the operation; the procurement of food from approved sources; employee hygiene; appropriate food temperatures; food handling practices; and acceptable storage conditions.
- Nursing home inspections are conducted every 6-15 months depending on the compliance history of the facility. That is, facilities with poor past performance are inspected more frequently.
- Nursing homes and hospitals are sanctioned if they fail to correct deficiencies and may be sanctioned regardless of correction status for egregious noncompliance. Egregious noncompliance is used to describe deficiencies that pose a serious threat to the health and safety of patients or residents where serious harm or death could result.
- For nursing homes and hospitals, when investigating concerns related to infection control surveyors review the comprehensive infection control program which includes procedures and processes to prevent food borne illness as well as food service operations where that is appropriate.
- Most hospitals are accredited by an organization deemed to have standards consistent with federal and state requirements and the Agency accepts the accreditation inspection for licensure purposes. The surveys conducted by the accrediting organizations are conducted every three years and includes safe food service operations. The Agency continues to be involved in complaint investigations.
- The Agency will refer findings related to food service operations to the Department of Health for consideration of epidemiological reviews.
- Agency survey staff have been instructed to be on heightened awareness during routine inspections and complaint investigations since the oversight of food service operations has been reduced in frequency.

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