

COVID-19 Webinar for Hospital Accreditation

# Q&A With The Joint Commission

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# Panel

**Andrea A. Coffaro, MBA**  
Senior Associate Director  
Accreditation and Certification Operations  
The Joint Commission

**Maura Naddy, MSN, RNC-OB**  
Associate Director  
Standards Interpretation Group  
The Joint Commission

**Theresa Hendricksen, RN, MS, FACHE**  
Field Director  
The Joint Commission

**Kenneth Hebert, MAOM, CHSP, CHEP**  
Engineer  
Standards Interpretation Group  
The Joint Commission

**Tiffany Wiksten, MSN, RN, CIC**  
Associate Director  
Standards Interpretation Group  
The Joint Commission

# Recovery and The Joint Commission

# Your questions

You have asked several questions about our survey process during COVID-19:

- How or when will we get a survey?
- What type of instruction have you provided your surveyors?
- What will that survey process look like, any differences?
- What will the surveyors focus on?

# When and how will survey activity resume?

- Survey activity has been ongoing. We are transitioning from off-site/virtual surveys back to onsite surveys
- As of March 15, 2021, account executives are no longer contacting organizations regarding the scheduling of an on-site event. Organizations should monitor the Notification of Scheduled Events section of the Joint Commission Connect page for notification
- We are aware that surveys are past their due dates, CMS is also aware – we will conduct those surveys when we are able to do so
- We will prioritize initials and past due organizations

# Offsite (virtual) survey

**Offsite (virtual) survey**– we have been transitioning away from this model since March 15th

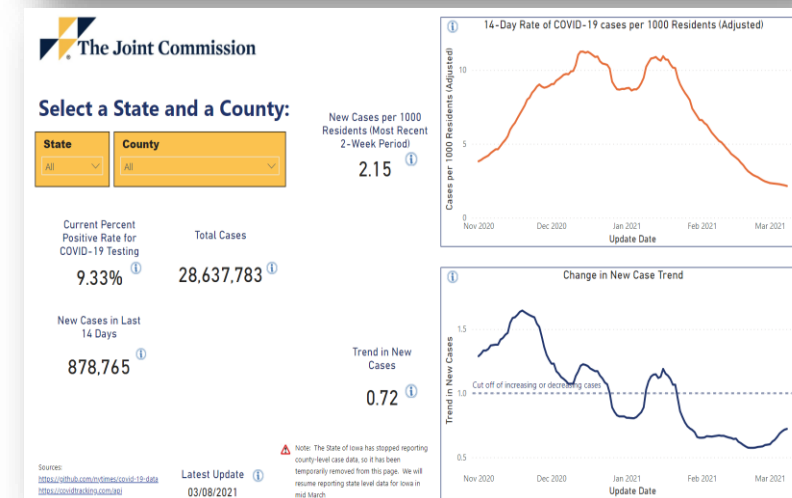
- Surveys will primarily be conducted onsite
- If an offsite event is already in progress, i.e., dry run conducted, the following will be used to conduct the survey:
  - Secure Zoom technology for the survey and facility review
  - Use of a secure SharePoint site for document upload to review pre-survey

# How do you determine where to conduct onsite surveys?

## Community Prevalence Dashboard

- Number of COVID-19 cases are lower with less impact to organizations
- Cases/thousand population and new cases within the county
- Determination that our staff can travel to area safely and find appropriate accommodations

The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of The Joint Commission website with a search bar and a 'Login' button. Below the navigation, a breadcrumb trail reads 'Home > Resources > Research > Operations Support Research'. The main content area features a section for 'Operations Support Research' with a description: 'Analysis and interpretation of data to inform and support Joint Commission programs and services.' To the right is a 'Research' menu with options for 'Operations Support Research', 'Evaluation Research', and 'Health Services Research'. Below this is the 'COVID Community Prevalence Dashboard' section, which includes a brief description and a 'View community COVID rates' button.



<https://www.jointcommission.org/resources/research/operations-support-research/>

# What instructions have been provided to our surveyors?

- **Follow the most current CDC guidelines**
- Do not travel if you are sick
- Do not travel if you have been in close contact with individuals with known or suspected COVID-19
- Avoid large crowds
- When traveling wear a mask/face covering
- Practice physical distancing
- Practice good hand hygiene



# What instructions have been provided to our surveyors?

- **Review and follow individual state department of health specific travel regulations\*\***
- When onsite wear a medical mask and eye protection
- **Follow the organizations' infection prevention and control policies for entry and use of PPE**
- Do NOT enter at risk or confirmed COVID-19 resident rooms
- Do NOT enter rooms where high-risk procedures performed
- The Joint Commission does not have a routine COVID-19 testing program for surveyors

*\*\*Joint Commission surveyors are designated as essential workers*

# What has changed about the survey process?

The survey process and its components will remain the same however here are some guidelines for the survey:

- Limiting the number of individuals in group sessions
- The use of audio or videoconferencing could be incorporated to safely expand the number of attendees for sessions
- Use of masks will be a routine practice
- Maximize the use of technology to eliminate the number of people needed to sit directly next to an individual for an extended period of time. (For example, screen sharing or projecting medical records)
- Interviewing patients and staff by telephone
- Driving in separate cars to offsite or patient homes

# Survey process - continued

- We will NOT Enter at risk or confirmed COVID-19 rooms or homes.
- We will avoid visiting a unit with any confirmed COVID-19 patients when possible.
- Limited physical review of high risk and aerosol generating procedures
- Consider using a simulation and/or distant review of certain activities/procedures
- Practice social/physical distancing during the survey
- Follow “PPE” and risk reduction strategies as established by the CDC
- Limit attendance at group sessions e.g., opening, briefings, system tracers
- Limiting observers or scribes to avoid additional exposure during the survey

# What will be the focus of survey activities?

- During the opening conference we will have a discussion with you about the impact of the current pandemic and your organization's response.
- We will discuss both Infection Control and Emergency Management.
- The focus of our survey will not be the timeframe of the public health emergency but the current situation within your organization.

# Additional Questions

For onsite surveys, should staff/surveyors be vaccinated?

- The Joint Commission does not require surveyors receive a COVID-19 vaccine, although it is encouraged
- Many surveyors are vaccinated

Can we provide additional avoid dates?

- We would ask that you do not provide additional avoid dates due to the difficulty in scheduling surveys – avoid dates already submitted will be honored to the extent we can do so.

# Environment of Care and Life Safety

# Pre-Submitted Questions

What documentation of emergency management and incident command activities are surveyors going to want to see with regards to COVID?

# Pre-Submitted Questions

For temporary negative pressure rooms do we still need to get the air changes per hour (ACH) required? Will we be able to continue to convert patient rooms to negative pressure as needed in the future? These are not airborne infection isolation rooms (AIIR) only negative to adjoining spaces.



# Pre-Submitted Questions

For the regular rooms that are converted to negative pressure rooms for COVID patients: what is the requirement for monitoring of the neg. pressure? Those rooms don't have cont. monitoring; we make sure room is neg prior placing a patient, is that enough?

# Pre-Submitted Questions

During the state of emergency, we were unable to get a vendor in to perform monthly fire extinguisher inspections. How likely is this to be cited?

# Pre-Submitted Questions

What life safety standards and/or waivers exist for an outpatient rehab unit looking to temporarily expand into an area not typically utilized for patient care?

# Pre-Submitted Questions

What are the expectations for COVID-19 and the facility risk assessment?

# Infection Control Practices

# Pre-Submitted Questions

What are the recommendations for discontinuing isolation for a COVID-19 positive patient?

## **Resource:**

Discontinuation of Transmission-Based Precautions and Disposition of Patients with COVID-19 in Healthcare Settings (Interim Guidance)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/disposition-hospitalized-patients.html>

# Pre-Submitted Questions

For a patient who was COVID-19 positive that had met the criteria for discontinuation of transmission-based precautions, if they have no new symptoms and still test positive weeks later, do they require isolation if they come back to the hospital?

## **Resource:**

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/duration-isolation.html>

# Pre-Submitted Questions

Several general PPE questions were submitted including:

- Should we require face shields for staff working in proximity of less than 6 feet from each other?
- What type of mask should be worn for routine care of patients not receiving Aerosol Generating Procedures?
- Can an isolation gown and gloves be worn to transport a COVID-19 positive patient in the hallway?



# Pre-Submitted Questions

How does double masking, wearing a mask not provided by the healthcare facility or placing a medical mask over a N95 respirator mask apply in health care?

## **Resources:**

Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Healthcare Personnel During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-recommendations.html>

Improve How Your Mask Protects You

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/effective-masks.html>

# Pre-Submitted Questions

How does an organization determine when it is appropriate to return to normal PPE practices and discontinue contingency and crisis capacity strategies and is it possible to be operating under contingency or crisis mode for one type of PPE but conventional for another type of PPE.

## **Resource:**

Optimizing Supply of PPE and Other Equipment during Shortages

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/ppe-strategy/general-optimization-strategies.html>

# Pre-Submitted Questions

What are acceptable alternatives to N95 masks, if the size that is needed is not available and how long can you wear a N95 for extended use?

## **Resources:**

CDC Strategies for Optimizing the Supply of N95 Respirators

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/respirators-strategy/index.html>

# Pre-Submitted Questions

Should organizations still consider reprocessing N95 masks?

## Resources:

Strategies for Optimizing the Supply of N95 Respirators

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/respirators-strategy/index.html>

FDA

<https://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/letters-health-care-providers/fda-recommends-transition-use-decontaminated-disposable-respirators-letter-health-care-personnel-and>

# Pre-Submitted Questions

If approved products used to clean and disinfect medical equipment are not available due to shortages during the pandemic, does the organization need to obtain a letter from the manufacturer giving approval to use the alternative product if it is not included in manufacturers instructions for use?

# Pre-Submitted Questions

While disinfectant supplies are limited, is it appropriate for organizations to utilize disinfectants that are effective against targeted organisms found in the healthcare environment, but may not be effective against TB?

## **Resources:**

OSHA Bloodborne Pathogen Standards

<https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1910/1910.1030>

EPA Frequent Questions about Disinfectants and Coronavirus (COVID-19)

<https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus/frequent-questions-about-disinfectants-and-coronavirus-covid-19>

# Pre-Submitted Questions

Does testing patients for COVID-19 eliminate the need for the patient to wear a mask?

## **Resource:**

CDC Test for Current Infection (Viral Test)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/testing/diagnostic-testing.html>

# Pre-Submitted Questions

What should we do if an inpatient can't or won't wear a mask?

**Resource:**

Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Healthcare Personnel During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-recommendations.html>



# Pre-Submitted Questions

If a person has COVID-19 antibodies, why do they still have to wear a mask?

**Resource:**

Test for Past Infection

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/testing/serology-overview.html>

# Pre-Submitted Questions

How long will the mask mandate remain at organizations?

**Resource:**

Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Healthcare Personnel During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-recommendations.html>

# Pre-Submitted Questions

What are best practices for identifying COVID-19 positive patients who come to the outpatient setting for follow-up?

## **Resource:**

Healthcare Facilities: Managing Operations During the COVID-19 Pandemic

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-hcf.html#outpatient-ambulatory>

# Pre-Submitted Questions

Is screening for COVID-19 required for all persons (patients, visitors and healthcare workers) who enter the facility and are there recommendations for screening and documentation?

**Resource:**

Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Healthcare Personnel During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-recommendations.html>

# Pre-Submitted Questions

Do CDC recommendations have to be approved by the internal Infection Control Committee?

# Pre-Submitted Questions

Are policies required to reflect every measure implemented or change for COVID-19?

# Pre-Submitted Questions

Related to COVID-19 what are examples of findings during survey?

# Pre-Submitted Questions

What are The Joint Commission's infection control expectations for organizations after the pandemic?



# Pre-Submitted Questions

If staff doff a reusable gown inside the patient's room and they must carry the used isolation gown outside to the hamper, is it permissible to doff immediately outside of the room instead?

# CMS 1135 Waivers

# Pre-Submitted Questions

When can we expect to hear updates on the 1135 waivers? Will there be sufficient warning before waivers end?

# Public Health Emergency (PHE) Extension

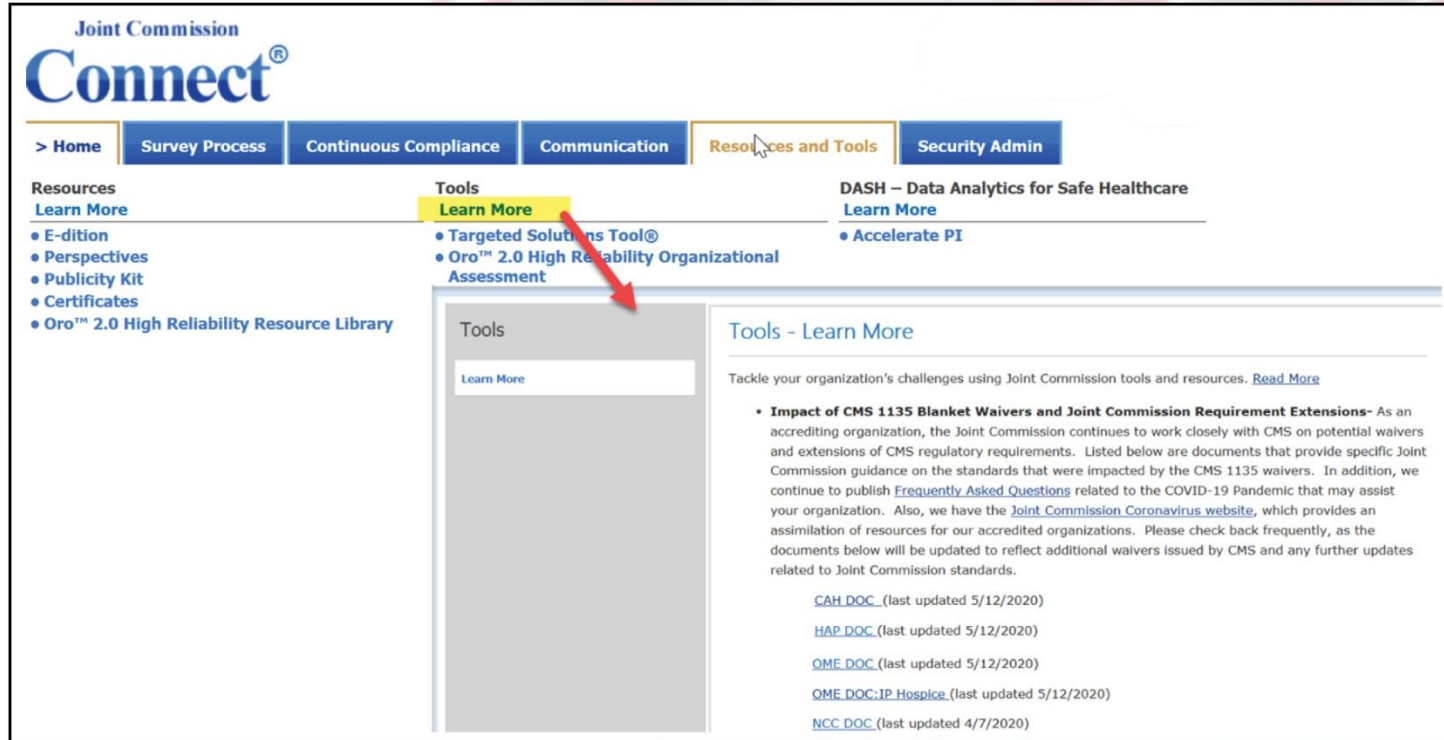
The Department of Health and Human Services released a statement on Thursday, 04/15/21 stating the PHE was extended

The renewal effective date is Thursday 04/21/21 and will last for 90 days

This is the fifth extension of the PHE

★ 1135 Waivers will remain in effect during the declared PHE

# Looking for more information on CMS 1135 Waivers?



The screenshot shows the Joint Commission Connect website interface. The top navigation bar includes links for Home, Survey Process, Continuous Compliance, Communication, Resources and Tools (highlighted), and Security Admin. Below this, there are three main sections: Resources, Tools, and DASH – Data Analytics for Safe Healthcare. The Tools section is highlighted with a yellow background and a red arrow pointing to the 'Learn More' link. The 'Learn More' link is also highlighted in yellow. The main content area displays the 'Tools - Learn More' page, which includes a list of tools and a detailed section on the 'Impact of CMS 1135 Blanket Waivers and Joint Commission Requirement Extensions'.

Joint Commission  
**Connect**<sup>®</sup>

> Home | Survey Process | Continuous Compliance | Communication | **Resources and Tools** | Security Admin

**Resources**  
[Learn More](#)

- E-dition
- Perspectives
- Publicity Kit
- Certificates
- Oro™ 2.0 High Reliability Resource Library

**Tools**  
[Learn More](#)

- Targeted Solutions Tool@
- Oro™ 2.0 High Reliability Organizational Assessment

**DASH – Data Analytics for Safe Healthcare**  
[Learn More](#)

- Accelerate PI

**Tools - Learn More**

Tackle your organization's challenges using Joint Commission tools and resources. [Read More](#)

- **Impact of CMS 1135 Blanket Waivers and Joint Commission Requirement Extensions-** As an accrediting organization, the Joint Commission continues to work closely with CMS on potential waivers and extensions of CMS regulatory requirements. Listed below are documents that provide specific Joint Commission guidance on the standards that were impacted by the CMS 1135 waivers. In addition, we continue to publish [Frequently Asked Questions](#) related to the COVID-19 Pandemic that may assist your organization. Also, we have the [Joint Commission Coronavirus website](#), which provides an assimilation of resources for our accredited organizations. Please check back frequently, as the documents below will be updated to reflect additional waivers issued by CMS and any further updates related to Joint Commission standards.

[CAH.DOC](#) (last updated 5/12/2020)

[HAP.DOC](#) (last updated 5/12/2020)

[OME.DOC](#) (last updated 5/12/2020)

[OME.DOC:IP Hospice](#) (last updated 5/12/2020)

[NCC.DOC](#) (last updated 4/7/2020)

Accredited organizations can learn more by visiting **Resources and Tools > Tools > Learn More** in their *Joint Commission Connect*<sup>®</sup> extranet site.

# Pre-Submitted Questions

In what manner does The Joint Commission expect/prefer facilities to document the use of waivers and regulatory flexibilities?

# Pre-Submitted Questions

We are accredited under the hospital, but our population is psychiatric patients and we are non-deemed, does the 1135 waivers apply to us even if we have our EOP activated as of last year?

# Pre-Submitted Questions

How will The Joint Commission survey disaster privileges?



# Pre-Submitted Questions

How much time will be provided to hospitals to revert back to compliance with standards once the national emergency is lifted?

# Pre-Submitted Questions

Please offer an overview of the 1135 waiver for a better understanding of this waiver process.

# Resources

- COVID Resources

- <https://www.jointcommission.org/covid-19/>

- Standards Interpretation

- <https://www.jointcommission.org/standards/standard-faqs/>

# Thank You

We support your efforts  
in response to the  
COVID-19 pandemic and  
hope to provide helpful  
resources

