

Unannounced survey process

- The Joint Commission conducts unannounced surveys unless it is not feasible or logical to do so.
- All hospitals and Centers for Medicare & Medicaid (CMS) deeming or recognition surveys are unannounced.

The following are **exceptions** to unannounced surveys:

Announced surveys: First survey conducted by The Joint Commission* | First survey conducted under the Early Survey Policy* | Focused Standards Assessment Options 2 and 3 surveys

The following receive **seven-day notice** of surveys:

Ambulatory care: Office-based surgery practices; telehealth services; sleep centers; ambulatory surgery centers not using accreditation for deemed status.

The following ambulatory care organizations with only one of the following services:* surgery/ anesthesia; medical/dental with less than 5,000 annual visits or less than three licensed independent practitioners; specified diagnostic/therapeutic with less than 3,000 annual visits or four or less licensed independent practitioners; mobile diagnostic services.

Behavioral health: Correction settings; foster care programs; methadone programs.

The following behavioral health organizations with less than 10 staff or average daily census less than 100: “small” settings; outpatient and day programs; 24-hour services; in-home behavioral health, case management, or assertive community treatment (ACT) program; inpatient freestanding organizations; community-based, freestanding organizations; inpatient crisis stabilization programs; residential/group homes.

Home care: Home care organizations with only one of the following services:* home health/personal care/support services; hospice; pharmacy; home medical equipment services (unless using accreditation to meet Medicare DMEPOS requirements).

Laboratory: “Small” organizations with less than 25,000 tests per year; freestanding IVF (in-vitro fertilization) laboratories.

Other facilities: Department of Defense facilities; Bureau of Prison facilities; Immigration facilities.

* Unless an unannounced survey is required for deemed status purposes.

For more information, organizations can refer to the accreditation manual, visit the Connect® extranet, or contact their account executive.

The Joint Commission

FACT SHEET

Read more

- Benefits of [accreditation](#) and [certification](#)
- [Standards](#)
- [Survey process](#)