What’s New in 2016

Revised content effective in 2016 is identified by underlined text.

On-site review process and the contents of this guide remain unchanged for 2016.
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Health Care Staffing Services Certification
Organization Review Preparation

In this activity guide your organization will find guidance on how to prepare for the onsite certification review, including:
- Identifying ways in which you can facilitate the onsite review process
- Onsite review logistical needs

This guide becomes even more important now that The Joint Commission conducts unannounced Health Care Staffing Services Certification (HCSS) reviews. Initial certification reviews will continue to be announced, but re-certification reviews are unannounced.

Important Reading
The Certification Review Process Guide describes each activity of a Joint Commission onsite certification review. Organizations should read through each of the following activity descriptions, which include:

- The purpose of the activity,
- Descriptions of what will happen during the session
- Suggested amount of time for the activity
- Discussion topics, when applicable
- Recommended participants
- Any materials required for the session

These descriptions can be shared organization-wide as appropriate.

Introductory Phone Call
Your Joint Commission Account Executive will be in touch with your organization by phone soon after your application is received. The purpose of this call is to:
- Conduct initial introductions
- Confirm information reported in your application for certification, to verify travel planning information and directions to offices
- Confirm your office address and phone number
- Confirm your hours of operation; if these change at any time, please call and inform your Account Executive
- Confirm your internet website address, if applicable
- Confirm that your organization knows how to access your secure The Joint Commission Connect extranet site to view certification-related information
- Obtain the phone number for any on-call service that your firm may provide
- Answer any of your questions.

Initial HCSS Certification Review
If this is your organization’s initial certification you will be notified in advance of the onsite review date(s). If you have any questions about the certification process prior to the onsite review date, please contact your Joint Commission Account Executive.
Unannounced Recertification Reviews
A certified staffing firm can have an unannounced recertification review occur 45 days prior to
and 45 days after its previous on-site review due date. The staffing firm’s due date is the day
after the last day of the last on-site certification review.

- Prepare an instruction sheet for staff to follow when certification reviewers arrive. Include:
  - An internal calling tree, with back-ups identified in the event staff are unavailable
  - A location where staff can direct the reviewer to wait
  - Procedures for issuing temporary passes or id’s to the reviewers, if applicable
  - Procedures for reviewer visitor book sign-in, if applicable
  - A plan to cover the additional logistics requirements noted below
  - Identification of who will be the reviewer’s contact person during the review, including
    back-ups in the event that person is not available when the reviewer arrives.

- Validate that the review is legitimate by accessing your The Joint Commission Connect
  extranet site. An individual in your organization with a login and password to your The Joint
  Commission Connect extranet website will do this by:
  - Accessing the Joint Commission’s website at www.jointcommission.org
  - Click on “The Joint Commission Connect” logo
  - Enter a login and password
  - If you cannot access the extranet site to validate reviewer identity, call your Account
    Executive.

Your organization’s extranet site contains the following information (posted by 7:30 a.m. in
your local time zone, on the morning of your review):
- An introductory letter from The Joint Commission Division of Accreditation and
  Certification Operations authorizing the reviewer’s presence for the unannounced
  review.
- Reviewer name(s) and biographical information
- Scheduled review dates

Logistics
- The review process includes phone calls with selected clinical staff and customers. It is
  suggested that the firm notify customers and clinical staff of its intentions to seek
  certification. The firm should advise customers and clinical staff that they may receive
  phone calls during the firm’s certification review to obtain feedback about the firm’s
  performance.

- The reviewer(s) will need workspace for the duration of the onsite review. A desk or table,
  telephone and access to an electrical outlet are desirable.

- Some review activities will require a room or area that will accommodate a group of
  participants. Group activity participants should be limited, if possible, to key individuals who
  can provide insight on the topic of discussion. It is the organization’s discretion as to who
  will participate.

- The reviewer will be moving throughout the office, talking with staff and observing the day-
  to-day operations of the organization. The reviewer will rely on organization staff to find
  locations where discussions can take place that allow confidentiality and privacy to be
  maintained and that will minimize disruption to the area being visited.
The onsite agendas found later in this guide offer the suggested order of activities and timeframes for each. Discuss any need for changes to the agenda with the reviewer.

Organizations should use this review process guide and the agendas as a planning tool for the unannounced review by identifying key participants and their back-ups for various sessions including phone numbers, so they can be contacted quickly.

Information Needed During the Onsite Review
The following is a list of items that should be accessible throughout the onsite review. Please note that it is not necessary to prepare documentation or assemble it in any particular way for the review. Reviewers are interested in seeing the resources that staff reference in their day-to-day activity. These items do not need to be stand-alone documents; the items noted may represent sections of other documents. Items with an asterisk (*) are those that will be needed as soon as possible following reviewer arrival.

- Organization chart, if one is available*
- Written code of business ethics*
- List of currently placed staff, including independent contractors when applicable, with an indication of the assignment setting (hospital, clinic, etc.), sorted by discipline, sorted by travel or per diem if applicable, and if travel an indication of the state*
- List of current customers, with approximate number of placements in the last 12 months*
- Business license, if applicable*
- Marketing information/materials*
- Contract with customer(s) template, if one is used
- Subcontract template, if one is used
- Clinical staff personnel records, as requested
- Clinical staff contract template (including with independent contractors), if one is used
- Clinical staff handbook or documents routinely given to staff upon hire
- Credentialing policies and procedures
- Copies of job descriptions for each discipline placed
- Copies of staff skills competency checklist for each discipline placed
- Copies of performance evaluation tool for each discipline
- Occupational safety reports/logs; policies and procedures for work-related accidents, injuries, and safety/risk management
- Policies and procedures related to emergency management or business interruption
- Description of complaint/grievance process presented to customers and clinical staff
- Emergency management plan
- Policy on presentation of proof of identity
- HCSS standardized performance measure data, graphical analysis and reports
- Any additional performance improvement data displays, action plans, etc.

Who to Call with Questions
If you have questions about standards and elements of performance – Call the Standards Interpretation Group at 630/792-5900. For a response by email, complete the “Standards Online Question Submission Form” by visiting www.jointcommission.org and selecting “Standards FAQs” under “TOP SPOTS.”

If you have questions about the onsite review process, agenda, scheduling, or other subjects – Call your Joint Commission Account Executive.
Health Care Staffing Services Certification

Reviewer Arrival, Opening Conference, Orientation to the Organization, and Reviewer Planning Session

Several activities will be occurring during the first hour a reviewer is present at the staffing firm. The breakdown of activities and the suggested length for each follows.

**Organization Participants**
- Reviewer Arrival -- Firm’s review coordinator or individual familiar with office operations
- Opening Conference -- Leadership and others at the discretion of the organization
- Office Tour -- Firm’s review coordinator or individual familiar with office operations
- Orientation to the Organization -- Firm’s review coordinator, leadership or others at the discretion of the organization
- Selection of Clinical Staff and Customer Tracers -- Firm’s review coordinator, other internal staff familiar with clinical staff and matching/placement processes and with contracts/formal agreements

**Materials Needed for this Session**
- Roster of clinical staff who are currently placed, sorted by discipline
- Roster of clinical staff available for placement
- List of customers where clinical staff are currently working or have recently worked
- Organization chart or diagram of the reporting structure

**Reviewer Arrival, Unannounced Reviews ONLY (5-15 minutes)**
This is time for the organization to prepare for proceeding with the certification review. It is an opportunity for the staff to gather some of the initial information the reviewer needs, to contact/gather necessary staff to participate in review activities, and to provide the reviewer with his or her workspace. The reviewer will use this time to get settled and answer any of the organization’s questions.

**Opening Conference (15 minutes)**
Approximately 15-minutes in duration that includes:
- Introduction of reviewer
- Introductions of organization review coordinator and leaders (Please note: Other staff can be introduced as the reviewer encounters them throughout the onsite visit)
- Overview of The Joint Commission and Certification
- Agenda review with discussion of any needed changes
- Questions and answers about the onsite review process

**Orientation to the Organization (20 minutes)**
This 20 minute session allows the reviewer to obtain some basic information about the organization’s structure and scope of operations. The reviewer will facilitate the discussion and use the information obtained to plan for the remainder of review activities. The reviewer will want to confirm information reported by the organization in their application for certification such as:
- Types of disciplines placed
- Number of per diem and travel clinical staff, as applicable
- Number of states in which clinical staff are currently placed, if applicable
- Types of customers the firm is currently providing with staffing services (e.g., hospitals, home care, school systems, ambulatory clinics)
- Number of contracts/formal agreements the firm currently has in place

**Office Tour, if necessary (5-10 minutes)**
This 10-minute session is a brief guided walk-through to orient the reviewer to the firm’s operations and office layout. The tour and the orientation can be combined if appropriate for the organization. Additional touring with lengthier introductions to staff and discussion can be accommodated during the Individual Clinical Staff Tracer time.

**Reviewer Planning (20 minutes)**
The reviewer, with the assistance of internal staff, will spend approximately 20 minutes:
- Identifying the sample of clinical staff whose personnel files the reviewer would like to examine
- Identifying the sample of clinical staff with whom the reviewer would like to talk to by phone at a designated time during the onsite visit

The number of personnel files selected and the number of clinical staff that will be contacted will vary based on the characteristics of each organization. Some minimum guidelines that will be followed include:
- A minimum of 30 clinical staff personnel files will be reviewed per day
- Three to seven clinical staff per day will be identified to participate in a phone call with the reviewer

Clinical staff rosters will be used to guide and facilitate this selection.

The reviewer will identify from the list of customers where clinical staff are currently placed those customers whose contracts/formal agreements the reviewer would like to see. A minimum of six contracts/agreements will be identified for review per day. The number selected will vary based on the number and types of customers. Reviewers will look at these contracts/agreements during the time designated on the agenda unless an alternate time has been negotiated.

The reviewer will identify customers to contact by phone. A minimum of six customers will be identified to participate in a brief phone call with the reviewer. The reviewer will identify the timeframe during which he or she would like to place or take these phone calls to facilitate the firm’s scheduling. Calls will be taken in private by the reviewer. Reviewers will be flexible in order to accommodate a customer’s schedule.

**Please Note:** It will be important that this activity conclude at the designated time, unless otherwise negotiated. The Staffing Firm Overview immediately follows and internal staff has been scheduled to participate in this activity and will be awaiting the reviewer.

Any activity scheduled for this session that has not been completed will be covered later in the review at a time and location agreed upon by the firm and reviewer.
Health Care Staffing Services Certification

**Staffing Firm Overview**

Joint Commission standards address various aspects of a staffing firm’s performance. The overview session is an opportunity for the organization and reviewer to discuss some specific topics covered in the standards, and more importantly, agreed to by the industry as key indicators of staffing firm performance.

**Organization Participants**

- Leader(s) of the staffing firm
- Individuals who can answer questions and explain the topics being discussed
- Others at the discretion of organization leaders

**Materials Needed for this Session**

- Organization chart
- Marketing materials

**Overview**

The reviewer will want to explore and learn about a variety of topics from those individuals most knowledgeable about the staffing firm’s processes and operations in these areas. The standards-based topics cross all functions and include:

- Organizational structure (reporting and accountability structure)
- Management and day-to-day operations
- Marketing (strategy and practice)
- Customer base (current and goals)
- Recruitment, retention and competency (strategies)
- Clinical staff performance evaluation (strategies)
- Clinical staff health (strategies, customer requirements)
- Tracking law and regulation requirements for staffing
- Processes for reporting and investigating work-related illness or injuries
- Contracts/Formal Agreements
- Conflicts of Interest (e.g., vendor management, subcontracting)
- Customer reassignment of clinical staff (floating)
- On-call structure and service, if applicable
- National Patient Safety Goals
- Emergency management
- Information management
- Performance improvement, use of data and improvement actions being taken
- HCSS standardized performance measures and what measure data is revealing
- Customer and clinical staff satisfaction and complaint reporting

The depth of discussion and questioning on each topic will vary. If a topic is better explained through demonstration or a review of documentation, indicate this to the reviewer and coordinate an alternate time and forum to explore the topic.
Health Care Staffing Certification

Contract/Formal Agreement Review

The content of contracts and agreements is clearly a considerable influence on a staffing firm’s performance. These agreements spell out what a customer can expect in terms of staffing firm performance and may additionally outline the staffing firm’s expectations of its customers in terms of treatment of clinical staff and feedback on clinical staff performance. Joint Commission standards require some specific elements be contained in the staffing firm’s formal agreements, and the purpose of this activity is to determine that the formal agreements meet standards expectations.

Organization Participants
- Individuals responsible for establishing, fulfilling and monitoring compliance with contracts and formal agreements
- Individuals familiar with the contracts/formal agreements who can facilitate the review
- Others at the discretion of organization

Materials Needed for this Session
The selected sample of contracts identified during the Opening Conference and Orientation to the Organization sessions

Preparation
The reviewer will gather information from the staffing firm’s application for certification as well as during the Opening Conference and Orientation to the Organization activities to help determine the contracts he or she will select for review.

The reviewer will be asking about the different types of contracts the staffing firm has in place, the types of health care entities and their size, and the type and number of staff placed per contract. The following criteria may be considered in the reviewer’s selection of a sample of specific contracts and formal agreements.
- Smallest health care entity
- Largest health care entity
- Contract in place for the longest duration
- Contract in place for the shortest duration
- Vendor management contracts (if applicable)
- Subcontracts with other staffing firms (if applicable)

One contract can satisfy multiple criteria. A minimum of six contracts/formal agreements will be reviewed per onsite day. The reviewer may request more if necessary.

The reviewer will make an effort to complete his or her selection of contracts during the Opening Conference and Orientation to the Organization sessions so that the firm’s staff may pull them in advance of this activity. However, reviewers may request additional contracts or formal agreements as the day progresses if there is a need to validate standards compliance.

Overview
The staffing firm is requested to have an individual who has authorized access to and is familiar with the contracts, formal agreements and customers available to answer reviewer questions, and facilitate and expedite the review.
Reviewers will discuss the entire contracting process while they are engaged in a review of the contracts. Specifically, they will trace the contracting process, including:

- Sales and marketing securing a customer for the firm’s staffing services
- Negotiation and establishment of a formal agreement
- Monitoring the firm’s ability to meet contractual obligations
- The firm’s customer service operations, including satisfaction, complaints, new needs/expectations
- Renewal or termination of a contract

Reviewers will be using the Contract Review Checklist (Appendix A) to record their findings and note any questions for follow-up. If a reviewer is unable to locate an item in the contract that is required by the standards he or she will seek help from the firm’s staff.

Information gathered through the contract and formal agreement review will be considered in all subsequent review activities.

At the conclusion of the designated time for this session, the reviewer will identify any contracts/formal agreements that can be returned to file and those that still require review. The reviewer will identify the time that contract/formal agreement review activity will be completed and if he or she will require the assistance of firm staff.
Health Care Staffing Services Certification

Personnel File Review

The review of personnel files provides an opportunity to see how consistently the staffing firm is complying with its own internal procedures, the requirements of its customers, and Joint Commission standards in terms of data it collects and uses to make hiring decisions and evaluate performance of clinical staff. While primarily a review of files, this session can reveal areas for improvement in human resources data collection, evaluation, and use in decision-making and reporting.

Organization Participants
- Individual(s) with authorized access to personnel files and familiarity with content and layout who can participate for the duration of this activity
- Others at the discretion of organization

Materials Needed for this Session
The selected sample of personnel files identified during the Opening Conference and Orientation to the Organization sessions

Preparation
The reviewer will gather information from the staffing firm’s application for certification as well as during the Opening Conference and Orientation to the Organization activities to help determine the number and types of disciplines that will be included in his or her selection of clinical staff personnel files. The reviewer will be asking about the different types and sizes of health care customers, and the type and volume of clinical staff placed at each. Selection of clinical staff for tracer activity and file review may be based on customer information and the following selection criteria which apply to all disciplines:
- Highly specialized health care providers (e.g., ICU, NICU, OR)
- Health care providers placed in areas not highly supervised (e.g., occupational nurse, school nurses, community service nurses [flu shots, blood pressure checks])
- New clinical staff member
- Long term clinical staff member
- Clinical staff member with greater working frequency
- Clinical staff member who works infrequently
- Clinical staff member who crosses state lines to practice

The reviewer will:
- Select a sample of three (3) clinical staff from each discipline
- Include per diem and travel clinical staff in the sample
- If applicable, select and examine a minimum of ten (10) credentials files that cross the specialties within the discipline of licensed independent practitioners (physicians, podiatrists, advance practice nurses, etc.); this selection will include placements in a variety of settings (inpatient, outpatient, emergency room, clinics)
- Select at least three clinical staff per discipline to speak with via phone
- Conduct a minimum of one (1) phone call with a clinical staff member per discipline
- Complete the Personnel File Review Checklist (Appendix B) for each file reviewed
The minimum number of personnel files that will be reviewed for clinical staff is 30. There is no maximum number of human resource files that can be reviewed. The reviewer will make every effort to make his or her initial selections of clinical staff for whom they would like to review files during the Opening Conference and Orientation to the Organization sessions so that the firm’s staff may gather them in advance of this activity. However, reviewers may request additional files as the day progresses if there is a need to validate compliance with standards.

Additionally, the reviewer will select several internal staff (supervisory staff, individuals responsible for collecting and evaluating credentials) for whom they would like to review personnel files. These are in addition to the clinical staff selected.

**Overview**

The staffing firm is requested to have available an individual(s) who has authorized access to personnel data and who is familiar with the clinical staff and internal staff file layout and contents. This individual should be able to both facilitate and participate in the file review process.

Files will be reviewed using the Personnel File Review Checklist (Appendix B) that lists the items of information required by the standards. Reviewers will look through each file identifying:
- The presence or absence of the items, and
- Any interactions the individual has had with staffing firm supervisory staff

If a reviewer is unable to locate information in a file, firm staff will be asked to locate the material. Inform the reviewer of any information maintained in locations other than the personnel file.

There are several blocks of time on the agenda for file review activity, both in the morning and afternoon.
Health Care Staffing Services Certification

Competence Assessment & Credentialing Session

Health care staffing firms are in the business of providing human resources to health care organizations looking for temporary staff to fulfill assignments. A crucial industry function is checking credentials and competency of individuals recruited to fill positions.

Organization Participants
- Individual(s) responsible for the recruitment of clinical staff
- Individual(s) responsible for collecting credentials information
- Individual(s) responsible for evaluating applicant credentials and making hiring decisions
- Individual(s) responsible for evaluating clinical staff performance
- Individual(s) responsible for customer communication
- Others at the discretion of organization

Materials Needed for this Session
- Samples of competency tests or other evaluation methods

Preparation
None required

Overview
Staffing firm representatives attending this session should be prepared to explain all aspects of the credentialing and competency assessment processes in their day-to-day operations. Tracing the process from the internal perspective, through every step, identifying individuals (that is, positions) that play a role from collecting, filing, and data entry to making decisions that impact further activity, is the goal of this session. Reviewers will want to explore standards-based topics such as:
- Application process
- Employment history checks
- Credentials verification process
- Hiring criteria
- Tracking of regulatory requirements for health care staff
- Orientation of clinical staff
- Placement criteria
- Clinical staff to customer matching process
- Clinical staff supervision
- Clinical staff performance evaluation, including use of customer feedback
- Maintaining competency of clinical staff

This session is most effectively conducted as a group discussion and explanation of the process combined with an office walk-through with a reviewer stopping to interact with individuals at their work stations.
Health Care Staffing Services Certification

Individual Clinical Staff Tracers

A tracer is a review method that is used to evaluate the staffing firm’s performance as viewed by the individual clinical staff member and the customer at which a clinical staff member is placed. During tracer activity the reviewer will:

- Follow a clinical staff member’s experience with the firm from the point of first contact to the point of his or her first performance evaluation and all steps in between
- Assess the relationship of the clinical staff member with the firm and with the customer at which he or she is placed
- Assess the relationship between the staffing firm and the customer
- Evaluate the firm’s performance of processes related to recruiting, retaining, evaluating, and placing individual clinical staff

Organization Participants
Staffing firm representative(s) to guide the reviewer through clinical staff member experience

Materials Needed for this Session
The staffing firm may bring materials to illustrate/demonstrate and further explain a topic, such as an application, a computer demonstration at a work station, sample competency tests, clinical staff acceptance letters, newsletters, emails or other forms of communication

Preparation
None required

Overview
The reviewer will evaluate processes from the perspective of the health care professional who desires a position with the staffing firm. Tracer activity in a health care staffing firm will follow a clinical staff member’s entire experience from the point of first contact to the present. A clinical staff tracer will focus on hand-offs and clinical staff communication.

Depending on the staffing firm’s office environment and number of staff, the reviewer will conduct the clinical staff tracer by moving throughout the staffing firm office and speaking with the individuals responsible for:

- Recruiting clinical staff
- Initial interaction with clinical staff (phone calls, interviews)
- Gathering data on potential clinical staff applicants
- Verifying credentials information on applicants
- Hiring decisions
- Orientation to the staffing firm, customers and assignments
- Developing and implementing the initial and ongoing competency assessment process
- Customer interaction
- Scheduling and placement decisions
- Receiving and responding to clinical staff questions, concerns, and complaints
- Receiving and responding to customer requests, questions, concerns, and complaints
- Clinical staff performance evaluation
NOTE: If moving through the office is disruptive to the firm’s operations or is not logistically feasible, the reviewer can be in an office or conference room and the individuals responsible for the various processes can come to the reviewer.

The reviewer will conduct approximately 5-10 minute discussions with individuals that include:

- Introducing him or herself to staff
- Asking the individual if they have a moment to talk (if meeting at work stations)
- Providing a brief statement about how they play a role in the firm’s certification
- Assuring the staff person that if he or she needs to take a phone call or take care of any business he or she should feel free to interrupt the discussion
- Asking the staff person to describe: what he or she does, his or her responsibilities, and how he or she interacts (directly or indirectly) with clinical staff or customers
- Asking about the hand-offs or coordination points with other firm staff members
- Asking the staff member any clarifying questions or for more details
- Asking the staff member if he or she has any questions about The Joint Commission certification or the review process
- Thanking the individual staff member for his or her time

Reviewers may not be able to meet with firm staff members in the order that a clinical staff member would interact with them due to their availability. There is no special order required, but at the end of all the discussions with staff the reviewer should have a clear picture of the process that a clinical staff member would experience.

Aspects of the staffing firm’s operations and procedures that will be explored through the clinical staff tracer activity include:

- Screening clinical staff
- Clinical staff application process
- Credentials verification process
- Hiring decision process
- Competency assessment process, initially and ongoing
- Orientation to staffing firm, customers, assignments
- Clinical staff to customer matching process
- Clinical staff feedback process (concerns/complaints)
- Clinical staff and on-call, after hours, and weekend internal staff communication
- Customer feedback process (concerns/complaints)
- Customer and on-call, after hours, and weekend internal staff communication
- Clinical staff performance evaluation process
- Clinical staff ongoing education, in-service
- Clinical staff retention
Health Care Staffing Services Certification

Clinical Staff Phone Call

The clinical staff phone call is an opportunity for the reviewer to hear first hand about the experience that clinical staff have had with the staffing firm. Contact with clinical staff allows the reviewer to learn about staffing firm performance from a different perspective.

Organization Participants

- Staffing firm representative(s) to orient the reviewer to the phone system
- Staffing firm representative(s) to provide the reviewer with a schedule of contacts

Materials Needed for this Session

A private workspace equipped with a telephone

Preparation

During the Opening Conference and Orientation to the Organization sessions the reviewer will select certain clinical staff with whom he or she would like to have a brief phone conversation. The staffing firm will have been asked to schedule these phone contacts to occur during a negotiated block of time on the agenda or at a time convenient for the clinical staff member. Reviewers will need a brief orientation on how to take and place calls.

Overview

The reviewer will have approximately a five minute, private (staffing firm internal staff should not be present) phone discussion with the clinical staff member. Reviewers will:

- Introduce themselves to the clinical staff member
- Confirm that the individual has a moment to talk
- Provide a brief statement about HCSS certification and how their feedback is important to the certification process
- Assure the clinical staff member that if he or she needs to attend to his or her duties at any time during the phone call he or she should feel free to interrupt the discussion
- Ask the staff person to describe his or her:
  - Orientation to the staffing firm and to the customer organization(s) at which he or she has been placed
  - Experience to date with the staffing firm and his or her overall impressions
  - Whom they contact at the staffing firm with questions, concerns, problems, or complaints;
  - Customer experiences and if he or she is ever asked by customers to float into areas where he or she may be uncomfortable based on their skills and experience.
  - Experience with being matched to customers
  - Experience with problem resolution
- Ask the staff member any clarifying questions or for more details
- Ask the staff member if he or she has any questions about this Joint Commission certification or the review process
- Thank the individual staff member for his or her time

Any follow-up from the phone calls will occur during Issue Resolution time. The staffing firm will receive a verbal report on any overall results from the phone calls with clinical staff during the Exit Conference.
Health Care Staffing Services Certification

Customer Phone Call

Customers are an important source of information about staffing firm performance. They are the end user of the services provided by the staffing firm and can frequently offer insightful evaluations and suggestions for improvement.

Organization Participants
- Staffing firm representative(s) to orient the reviewer to the phone system
- Staffing firm representative(s) to provide the reviewer with a schedule of contacts

Materials Needed for this Session
A private workspace equipped with a telephone

Preparation
During the Opening Conference and Orientation to the Organization sessions the reviewer will select certain customers with whom he or she would like to have a brief phone conversation. The reviewer will have asked the staffing firm to schedule these phone contacts to occur during this block of time on the agenda or at a time convenient for the customer. Reviewers will need a brief orientation on how to take and place calls.

Overview
The reviewer will have approximately a five minute, private (staffing firm internal staff should not be present) phone discussion with the customer. Reviewers will:
- Introduce themselves to the customer
- Confirm that the individual has a moment to talk and assure them that this will take about five minutes of their time
- Inform the individual that the call is a private conversation, and that the specific content of the call will not be shared with members of the staffing firm
- Provide a brief statement about Health Care Staffing Certification and how their feedback is important to the certification process
- Ask the customer to describe their experience with the staffing firm including:
  - Length of time the customer has been using the firm’s services
  - The disciplines they seek from the staffing firm
  - The staff assigned having the expected credentials
  - Staff orientation to the customer by the staffing firm
  - The firm’s request for evaluations of staff performance
  - Whom they call at the firm with questions, concerns, problems, or complaints
  - The staffing firm’s responsiveness to their questions, concerns, problems, or complaints
  - Their experience to date with the staffing firm and their overall impressions
- Ask the customer if they have any questions about Joint Commission certification or the review process
- Ask if there is anything else the customer would like to share about the staffing firm’s performance
- Thank the customer for their time

Any follow-up from the phone calls will occur during Issue Resolution time. The staffing firm will receive a verbal report on overall results from the customer phone calls during the Exit Conference.
Health Care Staffing Services Certification

On-Call Contact

When a staffing firm has committed to providing 24 hour service to customers and clinical staff, there is an expectation that service will be available.

Organization Participants
None required

Materials Needed for this Session
The on-call phone number

Preparation
The reviewer will check the application for certification to determine if the firm provides for on-call services. If the staffing firm provides on-call services, the reviewer will check the phone number and hours of operation.

Overview
Reviewers will usually place a call to the on-call phone number before the onsite certification review begins. The call will range anywhere from 5-10 minutes. The focus will be on the challenges presented by “outside of business hours” activity. Discussion will include:

- Introducing themselves to staff
- Asking the individual if he or she has a moment to talk
- Providing a brief statement about how he or she plays a role in the firm’s certification
- Assuring the individual that if he or she needs to take a phone call or take care of any business he or she should feel free to interrupt the discussion
- Asking the individual to describe: what he or she does, his or her responsibilities, and how he or she interacts (directly or indirectly) with clinical staff or customers
- Asking the individual about the resources available to him or her for doing his or her job after traditional business hours
- Asking about the challenges of his or her job and how the firm supports him or her in his or her role
- Asking about the hand-offs or coordination points with other firm staff members
- Asking any clarifying questions or for more details
- Asking the staff member if he or she has any questions about Joint Commission certification or the review process
- Thanking the individual for his or her time

Any follow-up from the phone call will take place during the course of the review.
NOTE: This session will be conducted at the reviewer’s discretion and as time is available. The reviewer will inform the staffing firm before lunch on the first day of the review if this session will take place and at what time.

This session is focused on the staffing firm’s use of data in improving safety and quality of care for patients served by its clinical staff. The reviewer and the organization will:

- Identify strengths and weaknesses in the staffing firm’s use of data, areas for improvement, and actions that could be taken.
- Identify specific data use issues requiring further exploration as part of subsequent review activities.

Organization Participants
- Staffing firm leaders
- Staffing firm representatives responsible for performance improvement activities
- Others at the discretion of the staffing firm

Materials Needed for this Session
- Performance measure (standardized measures) data reports
- Action plans demonstrating the firm’s use of and response to data

Overview
During the session, the reviewer(s) and staffing firm will discuss:

- The basics of data gathering and preparation, including:
  - Data collection, including validity and reliability for HCSS standardized performance measures
  - Data analysis and interpretation
  - Data dissemination/transmission
  - Data use and actions taken on opportunities for improvement
  - Monitoring performance/improvement
- Strengths and weaknesses in the processes used to obtain data and meet internal and external information needs

The reviewer(s) will want to know about the staffing firm’s priorities for performance improvement. This discussion will include a review of:

- Actions taken as a result of using data
- Selection and prioritization of performance improvement activities
- Dissemination of findings and staff involvement
- Data reporting – when it occurs and to whom
- Type of analyses being conducted – approach to trending data over time, graphical data displays, comparing data to an expected level of performance, and looking at data in combination for potential cause and effect relationships
Health Care Staffing Services Certification

**Issue Resolution**

Issue resolution time provides an opportunity for the reviewer to follow-up on potential findings that could not be resolved in other review activities.

**Organization Participants**
Will vary depending upon the issue

**Materials Needed for this Session**
Will vary depending upon the issue

**Preparation**
None required

**Overview**
The reviewer may have identified issues during review activities that require further exploration or follow-up with staff. This follow-up may include a variety of activities such as:
- Review of policies and procedures
- Review of personnel files
- Review of performance improvement data
- Discussions with selected staff

The reviewer will work with the staffing firm’s review coordinator to organize and conduct all issue resolution activity in a timely fashion.
Health Care Staffing Services Certification

Reviewer Report Preparation

The reviewer will use this time to compile, analyze and organize the data he or she has collected throughout the review into a report reflecting the organization’s compliance with standards.

**Organization Participants**
None required

**Materials Needed for this Session**
Private work space with access to an electrical outlet

**Preparation**
None required

**Overview**
This time is reserved on the agenda for the reviewer to reflect on his or her observations and activities and determine if there are any findings that reflect issues of standards compliance. The reviewer will be using his or her laptop computer to prepare a Summary of Certification Review Findings Report and plan for the Organization Exit Conference.
Health Care Staffing Services Certification

Organization Exit Conference

During the Organization Exit Conference the reviewer will:

- Report observations and present the Summary of Certification Review Findings report if desired by the CEO
- Review the issues of standards compliance that have been identified during the review
- Allow the organization a final onsite opportunity to question the review findings or provide additional material regarding standards compliance
- Review required follow-up actions as applicable

Organization Participants

- Chief executive officer (CEO)
- Other senior leaders identified by the CEO
- Other staff at the discretion of the CEO

Materials Needed for this Session
Copies of the Summary of Certification Review Findings report--if it is being distributed to staff

Preparation
None required

Overview
This is a 30-minute activity that takes place on the last day of the review. The CEO, organization leaders, and other organization staff as invited by the CEO will be present to hear a verbal report of the review observations. The certification review findings and report are shared with participants ONLY with the permission of the CEO.

The reviewer will use the Summary of Certification Review Findings report as the basis for conducting the Organization Exit Conference, even if the CEO does not wish to distribute the printed report to participants.

When opening the Organization Exit Conference, the reviewer will:

- Explain the session format and approach
- Reiterate that performance observations have been communicated and discussed throughout the review
- Indicate that questions and comments are encouraged during this session.

Reviewers will:

- Comment on areas in which the staffing firm is performing well
- Present observations of less than full compliance
- Respond to questions and comments about findings.

Before ending the Organization Exit Conference, the reviewer will:

- Recap the Joint Commission follow-up process including the Evidence of Standards Compliance and Measure of Success procedures
Health Care Staffing Services Certification

Intra-cycle Evaluation Process

All organizations participating in the certification process are required to collect, report, and monitor their performance relative to the standardized measures on an ongoing basis. The Certification Measure Information Process (CMIP) tool assists certified organizations with the data collection, reporting and monitoring requirements associated with the standardized measures. The CMIP tool is available on your organization’s secure extranet site, The Joint Commission Connect. The Performance Measure (PM) Data Report portion of the CMIP tool is available for all staffing organizations to perform an annual analysis of their performance relative to each performance measure.

For all staffing organizations that participated in an initial or recertification review in 2009, a mid-point (intra-cycle) evaluation of the performance measurement activities and standards compliance will be conducted via conference call with a Joint Commission reviewer.

Prior to the Intra-cycle Event
Your organization will receive an automated email to the primary certification contact and the CEO approximately 3 months in advance of the anniversary date of your last certification review. You will have 30 days to enter any missing monthly data points for any of the three standardized measures, complete the performance measure (PM) data report for each measure, and review your performance improvement plan for any updates. Once everything has been entered or updated, please use the submission checklist section of the CMIP tool to formally submit the CMIP tool to The Joint Commission for the intra-cycle event. If the tool is not submitted on time, your organization will receive an email reminder to submit the tool or risk having your certification decision changed.

Intra-cycle Evaluation Logistics
The intra-cycle evaluation conference call will take place as close as possible to the one year mid-point of the current two year certification cycle. The call will be scheduled by a Joint Commission reviewer with the person identified in the “Intra-cycle Conference Call Contact Information” section of the CMIP tool for a time that is convenient to both parties involved. Participation in the intra-cycle conference call is mandatory for all staffing organizations.

Overview
During the conference call, the reviewer will discuss
- The results of your organization’s performance against the three standardized measures (monthly data),
- Your analysis of your performance (PM Data Report),
- Your organization’s ongoing approach to performance improvement (PI Plan)
- Your questions regarding compliance with Joint Commission standards

This call is your organization’s opportunity to have an interactive discussion with the Joint Commission reviewer to assure you are on the right track relative to performance measurement and ongoing performance improvement and standards compliance.

There are no negative outcomes to the intra-cycle event, unless the reviewer identifies that your organization has not actively engaged in performance measurement and improvement activities since the time of the most recently completed initial or recertification review.
Health Care Staffing Services Certification

**Agenda Templates**

- One Reviewer for One Day  
  Pages 26-29
- One Reviewer for Multiple Days  
  Pages 30-33
- Agenda for All Scheduled Review Days Between First and Last  
  Page 34
## Health Care Staffing Services Certification Review Agenda

### One Reviewer for One Day

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
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| 45 minutes starting at approximately 8:00 a.m. | Reviewer Arrival, Opening Conference, Orientation to the Organization  
- Introductions  
- Joint Commission & Certification overview  
- Agenda review | Certification review coordinator, leadership and others at the discretion of the organization |
| 20 minutes | Reviewer Planning Session  

*Please note: The reviewer needs a list of customers where clinical staff are currently working or have worked.*  
- Reviewer selection of contracts/agreements for review—A **minimum of six contracts/agreements** will be identified  
- These contracts/agreements need to be available for the Contract/Formal Agreement Review session  
- Reviewer selection of customers for contact—A **minimum of six customers** will be identified to participate in a brief phone call with the reviewer. The reviewer will identify the timeframe during which he or she would like to place or take these phone calls to facilitate the firm’s scheduling. Calls will be taken in private by the reviewer.  

*Please Note: The reviewer needs a roster of clinical staff who are currently placed or available for placement, sorted by discipline*  
- Reviewer selection of clinical staff records and tracers—A **minimum of 30** clinical staff will be identified  
- Files for these individuals need to be available for the Personnel File Review Session  
- Reviewer selection of clinical staff for contact—Three to seven clinical staff will be identified to participate in a brief phone call with the reviewer. The reviewer will identify the timeframe to place or take phone calls to facilitate the firm’s scheduling. Calls will be taken in private by the reviewer.  

Office tour—A **brief** guided walk-through to orient the reviewer to the firm’s operations and office layout.
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<td>Issue Resolution &amp; Reviewer Report Preparation</td>
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<td>30 minutes ending at approximately 4:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Organization Exit Conference</td>
<td>Program and clinical leadership and others at the discretion of the organization</td>
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### Health Care Staffing Services Certification Review Agenda
#### One Reviewer for Multiple Days -- First Day

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| 60 minutes starting at approximately 8:00 a.m. | Reviewer Arrival, Opening Conference & Planning  
- Introductions  
- Joint Commission and certification overview  
- Review of the agenda | Certification review coordinator, leadership and others at the discretion of the organization |

**Please note:** The reviewer needs a list of customers where clinical staff are currently working or have worked.

- Reviewer selection of contracts/agreements for review—A **minimum of six (6) contracts/agreements** will be identified per day for review  
- These contracts/agreements need to be available for the Contract/Formal Agreement Review session  
- Reviewer selection of customers for contact – A **minimum of six (6) customers** will be identified to participate in a brief phone call with the reviewer. The reviewer will identify the timeframe during which he or she would like to place or take these phone calls to facilitate the firm’s scheduling. Calls will be taken in private by the reviewer. |

**Please Note:** The reviewer needs a roster of clinical staff who are currently placed or available for placement, sorted by discipline

- Reviewer selection of clinical staff records and tracers--A **minimum of 30** clinical staff will be identified per day for review  
- Files for these individuals need to be available for the Personnel File Review Session  
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**Office tour** – A **brief** guided walk-through to orient the reviewer to the firm’s operations and office layout.
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<td>Reviewer Planning</td>
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## Last Day

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Organization Participants</th>
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<tr>
<td>180 minutes (3 hours) starting at</td>
<td>- Personnel File Review ... continued</td>
<td>Individual(s) who can assist the reviewer in establishing phone contact with clinical staff and customers</td>
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<td>approximately 8:00 a.m.</td>
<td>- Phone calls with clinical staff</td>
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<td>- Phone calls with customers</td>
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<td>Note: Reviewers may conduct additional Clinical Staff Tracers if time is available after completing phone calls and file review.</td>
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| 60 minutes                                 | Individual Clinical Staff Tracers                                         | Individual(s) who can step the reviewer through a clinical staff person’s experience with the firm from point of first contact through recruitment, hiring, orientation, first placement, and initial performance evaluation |
|                                           | - First contact (recruitment)                                            | Should involve individuals responsible for the day-to-day performance of activities; if possible, a different group of internal staff should be accessed each day |
|                                           | - Data gathering (application process)                                   | Can take place as an office operations walk-through with stops at various work stations to talk with internal staff as they are available. This can include demonstrations of tools that staff uses to do their jobs. |
|                                           | - Discussion related to file review                                       |                                                                                           |
|                                           |   - Licensure                                                           |                                                                                           |
|                                           |   - Credentials                                                         |                                                                                           |
|                                           |   - Competency                                                          |                                                                                           |
|                                           |   - Continuing education                                                |                                                                                           |
|                                           |   - Orientation                                                         |                                                                                           |
|                                           |   - Health status                                                       |                                                                                           |
|                                           | - Hiring decision                                                       |                                                                                           |
|                                           | - Orientation/assignment availability                                    |                                                                                           |
|                                           | - First placement                                                       |                                                                                           |
|                                           |   - How data is provided to customer                                    |                                                                                           |
|                                           |   - Clinical staff to customer matching process                          |                                                                                           |
|                                           |   - Customer reassignment of clinical staff (floating)                   |                                                                                           |
|                                           |   - Registering concerns/complaints                                      |                                                                                           |
|                                           | - Performance evaluation process                                         |                                                                                           |
| 30 minutes                                 | Reviewer Lunch                                                          |                                                                                           |
| 150 minutes                                | - Personnel File Review ... continued                                    | Individual(s) who can assist the reviewer in establishing phone contact with clinical staff and customers |
|                                           | - Phone calls with clinical staff                                        |                                                                                           |
|                                           | - Phone calls with customers                                              |                                                                                           |
|                                           | Note: Reviewers may conduct additional Clinical Staff Tracers if time is available after completing phone calls and file review. |                                                                                           |
| 60 minutes                                 | Issue Resolution & Reviewer Report Preparation                           | Certification review coordinator                                                           |
| 30 minutes ending at approximately          | Organization Exit Conference                                             | Program and clinical leadership and others at the discretion of the organization           |
| 4:30 p.m.                                 |                                                                         |                                                                                           |
Health Care Staffing Services Certification Agenda
For All Scheduled Review Days
Between the First and Last

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| 240 minutes (4 hours) starting at approximately 8:00 a.m. | - Personnel File Review …continued  
- Phone calls with clinical staff  
- Phone calls with customers | Individual(s) who can assist the reviewer in establishing phone contact with clinical staff and customers  
Note: Reviewers may conduct additional Clinical Staff Tracers if time is available after completing phone calls and file review. |
| 30 minutes | Reviewer Lunch | |
| 60 minutes | Individual Clinical Staff Tracers  
- First contact (recruitment)  
- Data gathering (application process)  
- Discussion related to file review  
  - Licensure  
  - Credentials  
  - Competency  
  - Continuing education  
  - Orientation  
  - Health status  
- Hiring decision  
- Orientation/assignment availability  
- First placement  
  - How data is provided to customer  
  - Clinical staff to customer matching process  
  - Customer reassignment of clinical staff (floating)  
  - Registering concerns/complaints  
- Performance evaluation process | Individual(s) who can step the reviewer through a clinical staff person’s experience with the firm from point of first contact through recruitment, hiring, orientation, first placement, and initial performance evaluation  
Should involve individuals responsible for the day-to-day performance of activities; of possible, a different group of internal staff should be accessed each day  
Can take place as an office operations walk-through with stops at various work stations to talk with internal staff as they are available. |
| 150 minutes (2.5 hours) | - Personnel File Review …continued  
- Phone calls with clinical staff  
- Phone calls with customers | Individual(s) who can assist the reviewer in establishing phone contact with clinical staff and customers  
Note: Reviewers may conduct additional Clinical Staff Tracers if time is available after completing phone calls and file review. |
| 30 minutes ending at approximately 4:30 p.m. | Reviewer Planning | Certification review coordinator |
Appendix A

The Joint Commission
Health Care Staffing Services Certification
Contract/Formal Agreement Review Checklist

Look for the following items in staffing firm customer agreements/contracts.

- Subcontractors - The use of subcontractors
- Competency Review - Defined responsibilities for the establishment of staff competency for the assignments staff are designated for
- Floating - Reassignment (floating) of personnel
- Employees or Independent Contractors - Whether staff are employees of the firm or independent contractors working through the firm
- Incident, Error Tracking System - The firm’s system for reporting, tracking, and documenting unexpected incidents, including errors, unanticipated deaths and other events, injuries, and safety hazards related to the care and services provided
- Requirements for Staff Specified - Were the requirements for the staff placed specified in the contract/formal agreement?
- Staff Matched Requirements - Were the contract expectations met? (Confirmed on phone calls with customers)

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<th>Subcontractors</th>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Floating</th>
<th>Employees or Ind. Contractors</th>
<th>Incident, Error, Tracking System</th>
<th>Communicating Occupational Safety Hazards</th>
<th>Orientation of Employees</th>
<th>Requirements for Staff Specified</th>
<th>Staff Matched Requirements?</th>
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## Appendix B

### The Joint Commission
Health Care Staffing Services Certification
Personnel File Review Checklist

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>ALL</th>
<th>Licensed Independent Practitioners Only</th>
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<th>Licensure</th>
<th>Certification ¹</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Training ²</th>
<th>Experience ³</th>
<th>Competency Eval.</th>
<th>Criminal Background</th>
<th>Health Screening Immunizations ⁶</th>
<th>Sanctions ⁷</th>
<th>Orientation documented ¹¹</th>
<th>Relinquishment of License/Reg ⁸</th>
<th>Termination of Hosp Privileges ⁹</th>
<th>Professional Liability Actions</th>
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1. Current licensure, certification, or registration required by the state, the firm, or customer from primary sources
2. Education and training associated with residency or advanced practice, experience, and competency appropriate for assigned responsibilities
3. Clinical work history/references
4. Initial and ongoing evaluation of competency
5. Information on criminal background according to law, regulation, and customer requirements
6. Compliance with applicable health screening and immunization requirements established by the firm or customer
7. Information on sanctions or limitations against an individual’s license is reviewed upon hire, and upon reactivation or expiration. For individuals who are practicing as Licensed Independent Practitioners, in addition to the aforementioned requirements, the firm performs the following according to law, regulation, and firm policy:
8. Voluntary and involuntary* relinquishment of any license or registration is verified and documented
9. Voluntary and involuntary* termination of hospital medical staff membership is verified and documented
10. Any evidence of an unusual pattern or an excessive number of professional liability actions resulting in a final judgment against the applicant is investigated and documented
11. Documentation that the clinical staff person has received orientation from the organization, according to HSHR.3, EP10

* Identifies elements that require Primary Source Verification