

Nursing Home Deficiencies Explained

All nursing homes in the U.S. that are certified for either Medicare, Medicaid, or both are surveyed approximately once a year by surveyors from the State Survey Agency. When a surveyor finds a situation that is in violation of federal or state regulations, the surveyor issues a *Citation of Deficiency*. The nursing home must then develop a *Plan of Correction* to fix the problem. The Plan of Correction must be approved by the State Survey Agency.

Between surveys, complaints filed with the Survey Agency are investigated by Complaint Investigators. If the complaint is found to be valid, a Citation of Deficiency is issued. These deficiencies are included in the total deficiency counts for that Survey Cycle.

Deficiencies carry a letter "grade" indicating the severity of the infraction. These letter "grades" are explained in the graph below. The graph also explains the time frames for the Survey Cycles and the descriptions of the star ratings.

EXPLANATION OF RATING AND DEFICIENCY	Scope of the Deficiency		
	Isolated	Pattern	Widespread
Severity of the Deficiency			
Immediate jeopardy to resident health or safety	J	K	L
Actual harm that is not immediate jeopardy	G	H	I
No actual harm with potential for more than minimal harm that is not immediate jeopardy	D	E	F
No actual harm with potential for minimal harm	A	B	C

<p>The deficiencies in this report have been issued during the last three Survey Cycles. An annual survey is conducted in each nursing home. Citations of deficiency springing from that survey and all deficiencies resulting from investigations of complaints during the year are included in a cycle.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Cycle 1 contains all citations of deficiency in the past 12 months. ✦ Cycle 2 deficiencies were issued 13-24 months previously. ✦ Cycle 3 deficiencies were issued 25-36 months previously. 	<p>The CMS nursing home Star Rating system awards a star rating based on health surveys, staffing levels, and quality measures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ 1 Star – well below average ✦ 2 Stars – below average, ✦ 3 Stars - average ✦ 4 Stars – above average ✦ 5 Stars – well above average
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There are two kinds of deficiencies, health deficiencies and fire deficiencies. The health deficiencies are issued for anything prohibited by federal or state regulations in the operation of the home. Fire deficiencies deal with the structure of the nursing home itself in relation to accepted fire prevention measures.

The wording of any deficiency comes directly from a list of deficiency descriptions. Those descriptions each carry a code consisting of a letter and two or three numbers. For health deficiencies, that letter is an F and are referred to generally as F-tags. For fire deficiencies, the letter is a K. The associated numbers indicate which of the many deficiency descriptions applies.

For instance, one health deficiency is

F-333 Ensure that residents are safe from serious medication errors.