What are common CMS deficiencies related to facility maintenance?

THE DIRECT ANSWER

The most common CMS facility-maintenance deficiencies are documentation and testing failures, not broken equipment : generators not inspected weekly or load-tested monthly, fire drills falling into predictable patterns, fire alarm and sprinkler testing missed or unlogged, smoke barrier penetrations left unsealed after contractor work, and exits obstructed by storage or equipment. National K-tag data puts generator inspections, exit access, smoke barriers, fire drills (K-712), and fire alarm testing at the top year after year.

THE REPEAT OFFENDERS

- Generator inspections and tests — weekly inspections and monthly 30-minute load tests missed, wrong frequency, or done but undocumented. ~11% of facilities cited nationally.
- Exit access — obstructed egress, exits discharging into fenced areas, storage in exit paths, camouflaged doors. ~11% cited.
- Smoke barriers — unsealed penetrations from contractor wiring and phone lines, missing ratings. ~11% cited.
- Fire drills (K-712) — predictable patterns instead of unexpected times; times not varying by at least an hour. ~10% cited.
- Fire alarm testing and maintenance — missed NFPA-frequency tests, missing documentation, neglected off-premises transmission testing. ~8% cited.
- Sprinkler coverage — missed areas (closets, storage, attics), obstructions from ductwork or storage, spacing problems. ~8% cited.
- Corridor clutter — wheeled equipment parked in egress corridors beyond what's permitted; carts left unattended.

THE PATTERN BEHIND THE PATTERN

- Nearly every item on this list is a routine that slipped — the weekly check nobody owned, the log nobody filed, the contractor penetration nobody reinspected. CMS doesn't expect perfection; it expects a program that catches its own misses.

FIELD QUESTION

What is the most cited CMS life safety deficiency?

Generator inspections and testing consistently rank at or near the top nationally, followed by exit access, smoke barriers, and fire drills.

From Healthcare Facility Hub - free, like everything on the site. The full article is at the link below.

Caution: codes, editions, and targets vary by facility and authority having jurisdiction (AHJ). Figures marked as common practice are facility targets, not code requirements. Confirm against your AHJ and the current code text before acting.