How do I respond to a Joint Commission Requirement for Improvement?

THE DIRECT ANSWER

When you receive a Requirement for Improvement (RFI), you have two paths: submit a clarification within 10 business days if you were actually compliant at the time of survey, or submit an Evidence of Standards Compliance (ESC) within 60 days of the findings report posting, documenting the corrective actions you completed. Miss the windows and the RFI stands — and unresolved RFIs can escalate to follow-up surveys or denial of accreditation.

PATH 1: CLARIFICATION (10 BUSINESS DAYS)

- Clarification argues you were compliant during the survey but the surveyor didn't see the evidence. It only works if the evidence existed at the time — actions taken during or after the survey don't count.

PATH 2: EVIDENCE OF STANDARDS COMPLIANCE (60 DAYS)

- What was done — the specific corrective actions completed, with completion dates
- Sustainment plan — how you'll monitor ongoing compliance (no data submission required, but the plan must exist)
- For higher-risk SAFER placements — documented leadership involvement and a preventive analysis of underlying causes

FIELD QUESTION

How long do I have to respond to an RFI?

10 business days for a clarification, 60 days from the findings report posting for the Evidence of Standards Compliance.

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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.