How do I prepare for a CMS validation survey of my facility?

THE DIRECT ANSWER

A CMS validation survey is how CMS checks the checkers: state surveyors re-survey a sample of accredited ("deemed") facilities to verify the accrediting organization did its job. You don't get to choose whether you're sampled — so preparation means running your facility as if every survey were a CMS survey , because for validation purposes, it is. The surveyors use the same K-tags, the same SOM guidance, and the same Life Safety Code.

WHAT MAKES VALIDATION SURVEYS DIFFERENT

- They're comparative. CMS compares the validation findings against what your accreditor found. Disparities — serious deficiencies your AO missed — reflect on the AO's deeming authority, but the deficiencies are still yours to correct.
- They're unannounced. Like all CMS surveys, there's no warning and no preparation window.
- They're thorough on life safety. LSC specialists conduct the physical-environment portion with the full K-tag checklist.

THE PREPARATION CHECKLIST

- Reconcile your last AO survey. Every RFI or finding from your accreditor should be corrected with evidence on file. Validation surveyors will re-check them.
- Audit the K-tag documentation set. 12 months of fire alarm, sprinkler, generator, and extinguisher testing; drill logs with varying times; ILSM records for any project or deficiency.
- Walk the building like an LSC specialist. Barrier penetrations, door latching, corridor clearance, exit signage, storage in mechanical spaces — the greatest-hits list from the deficiencies data.
- Verify your e-SOC / building assessment is current. Stale Plans for Improvement are easy findings.
- Quiz staff. RACE/PASS, ILSM awareness in construction areas, emergency procedures — on all shifts.
- Confirm your AEM program document exists (if you claim AEM) with risk rationale for each frequency.

FIELD QUESTION

What is a CMS validation survey?

A re-survey of a sample of accredited (deemed) facilities by state surveyors, used by CMS to verify the accrediting organization's survey performance.

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.