

Update – SNF COVID-19 Testing Does Not Apply to EMS

 [ambulance.org/2020/09/18/snf-testing_requirements_clarify_testing/](https://www.ambulance.org/2020/09/18/snf-testing_requirements_clarify_testing/)

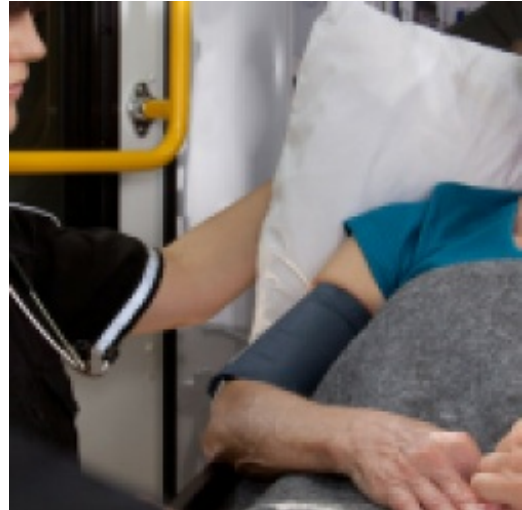
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September 18, 2020

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Posted in Operations, Patient Care.

CMS Clarify in Guidance that EMS Personnel Are Not Required To Be Tested under Skilled Nursing Facility Testing Interim Final Rule

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) have issued guidance clarifying the types of personnel who are subject to the testing requirements when entering a Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF) in the Interim Final Rule with Comment (IFC) on Additional Policy and Regulatory Revisions in Response to the COVID– 19 Public Health Emergency. The new guidance memo states:



Entry of Health Care Workers and Other Providers of Services

Health care workers who are not employees of the facility but provide direct care to the facility's residents, such as hospice workers, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) personnel, dialysis technicians, laboratory technicians, radiology technicians, social workers, clergy etc., must be permitted to come into the facility as long as they are not subject to a work exclusion due to an exposure to COVID-19 or show signs or symptoms of COVID-19 after being screened. ***We note that EMS personnel do not need to be screened so they can attend to an emergency without delay.*** We remind facilities that all staff, including individuals providing services under arrangement as well as volunteers, should adhere to the core principles of COVID-19 infection prevention and must comply with COVID-19 testing requirements.

CMS issued this guidance at the request of the American Ambulance Association (AAA) to address concerns our members had raised about some SNFs misinterpreting the requirements. The guidance is also consistent with AAA's interpretation of the IFC. As we indicated in an earlier Member Advisory, the IFC requires SNFs to test certain individuals for COVID-19 before they enter the facility. Specifically, it applies to employees, consultants, and contractors of a skilled nursing facility (SNF). It does not apply to

vendors, suppliers, attending physicians, family, or visitors. Providers, such as medical directors and hospice, that are under a contract or consultants to a SNF are subject to the rule. EMS personnel do not come within the scope of the IFC.

Even though the testing requirements of the IFC do not extend to ground ambulance services that do not have a contractual relationship with a SNF, the AAA supports the efforts of all of our members to follow the World Health Organization and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Guidelines to have EMT and paramedics use full Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) when they are engaging with any patient, not only those in SNFs. We also want to recognize the best practices of many members who have worked with SNFs to establish outdoor locations where the SNF personnel, when possible, can bring a patient out of the building to transfer the patient to the ambulance. These and other examples of safe practices can help control the spread of COVID-19, which is the paramount concern.

COVID-19, Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF)