

Policy AC-105

Applying for a Variance from a Standard

Purpose:

To provide a procedure by which a hospital may request a permanent or temporary variance from the Pennsylvania Trauma Systems Foundation (PTSF) Standards of Accreditation. Requests may be made due to building construction, equipment failure requiring time to replace, key personnel changes or other major factors affecting the operations of a pursuing or accredited trauma center.

Procedure:

1. A signed letter must be sent electronically to the PTSF by the hospital stating the reason and estimated duration for the proposed variance. The letter should include any applicable supporting documentation.
 - A. Variances must be requested as soon as possible and prior to actual implementation of the proposed alternative plan.
 - B. For content and supporting document recommendations, as well as submission deadlines, please contact the PTSF Standards Committee Staff Liaison.
2. All requests will be initially reviewed by a PTSF staff member to determine if further information is needed. The request will then be blinded and presented to the Standards and/or Executive Committee to determine if further information is required, assess the impact of the proposed variance on the operations of the hospital, and make a recommendation to the PTSF Board of Directors (Board).
3. The Board shall determine whether to grant a permanent variance with or without contingencies, grant a temporary variance with or without contingencies, or suspend accreditation or services until the trauma center is fully compliant with the standards.
 - A. All requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Decisions will be based on the circumstances at the hospital, and impact of the requested variance on the hospital, trauma system, and trauma patient care.
 - B. Contingencies can include, but are not limited to, additional requirements to the alternative plan and/or submission of periodic reports to the PTSF.
4. The hospital seeking a variance will be notified of the status of its request as soon as possible but not later than three business days after the next scheduled Board meeting.
5. If a hospital is operating with a variance on the day of a site visit(s) this information will be disclosed to the survey team members via the application for survey and presented in the Performance Improvement Overview session. Effort will be made to incorporate the variance (if applicable) into the overall medical records selected for survey. Hospitals must have information available for the survey team members related to the variance, including associated performance improvement efforts and quality-related initiatives.
6. If a hospital is operating with a variance on the day of a site visit(s) this information will be disclosed to the PTSF Board during the deliberation process. The Board will determine whether to continue the permanent variance with or without contingencies, continue the temporary variance with or without contingencies, change approval of a temporary variance to a permanent variance, or deny continuation of a variance.

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7. The hospital must notify the PTSF, via email, within seven calendar days if any changes occur making the variance no longer necessary.

Approved by the PTSF Board of Directors and/or Executive Committee:

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Revise Date: 02/09/2000, 06/05/2008, 03/12/2015, 07/28/2016, 5/23/2023

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