

# Policy AC-138

## Process for Elevating Trauma Center Accreditation Level

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### Purpose:

To provide a mechanism for hospitals to follow when seeking to elevate the trauma center's current accreditation level.

### Process:

In order to complete the process for elevating to a higher level accredited trauma center the following conditions *must* be met:

- Submission of a letter of intent to Pennsylvania Trauma Systems Foundation (PTSF) to apply for elevation of the current trauma accreditation level.
- Completion of the Application for Survey (AFS).
- Submission of all applicable fees. Reference: "Fee Schedule" posted annually ([www.ptsf.org](http://www.ptsf.org)) regarding application fees and site survey fees.
- Completion of the site survey.
- PTSF Board of Directors (Board) deliberation and approval.

### Procedure:

#### 1. Letter of Request:

- A. A letter of request to apply for elevation of the current trauma accreditation level must be submitted to PTSF by July 1<sup>st</sup> of the year *prior* to the requested year of survey.
  - i. If the request is within the current survey cycle for the trauma center, the center will be invoiced for the additional survey fee for which the center is applying.
  - ii. If the request is greater than one year prior to the current survey cycle, the trauma center will be invoiced for the total survey fee for which the center is applying.

#### 2. Trauma Centers wishing to elevate from a Level II to a Level I trauma center within their current survey cycle may request a modified survey if the following qualifications are met:

- A. Qualifications
  - i. The trauma center has been surveyed within the last year and did not receive any significant issues.
  - ii. The trauma center was granted an unconditional three-year accreditation status.
- B. "Modified" Team Composition:
  - i. One Nurse Surveyor
  - ii. One Physician Surveyor
- C. Schedule/Expectations:
  - i. A focus on Residency, Research and ICU standard compliance.
  - ii. A focused case review of patients who were transferred from the institution.
  - iii. The schedule for the site survey day will remain unchanged.

NOTE: *Level III and IV trauma programs are not eligible for a modified site survey visit.*

### 3. Application for Survey (AFS)

- A. PTSF will give access to the requested level's electronic AFS as soon as the fees are submitted.

NOTE: The Digital Innovations, Inc. (DI) software updates are installed annually; some questions may change (this usually occurs in the fall of each year).

- B. The AFS submission deadline will be based on the site survey date. Refer to the "Site Survey Guidebook" for additional details.
- C. During the review of the AFS, the institution will be notified to reconsider the higher level accreditation visit and/or re-identify the survey to the typical reaccreditation level if the Foundation staff determines that the institution has not significantly met criteria for the higher level pursuit.

### 4. Site Visit

- A. Site visits will be scheduled by PTSF staff at least six months in advance.
  - i. Level I & II surveys typically occur between March and June
  - ii. Level III surveys typically occur in August
- B. If a hospital has a conflict with the date of the site visit or the members of the site survey team, they will have two weeks to respond to PTSF from the time of notification. No guarantees are given that changes can be made, but every effort will be made to accommodate requests (see Accreditation Policy AC-119, Surveyor Selection Criteria).
- C. The format of the survey day will be adhered to in accordance with the most current version of the "Site Survey Guidebook."

### 5. Board Deliberation and Outcome

- A. Trauma centers that seek to upgrade trauma level status can be granted up to a three-year accreditation cycle based upon several criteria. Factors that determine the duration of accreditation include—but are not limited to—accreditation history, significant issue(s), overall compliance with Standards of Accreditation, current accreditation cycle [if applying for "upgrade" out-of-cycle], as well as the trauma level pursued by the proposed upgrade site visit. (This is also referenced in policy AC-137.)
- B. If an institution is not granted a level elevation, they may reapply the following year.
- C. Following board deliberation meetings, a press release is issued by PTSF announcing all of the accredited trauma centers. This includes any newly accredited hospitals (AC-132, Media Notification Regarding Accreditation Status of Trauma Centers).

### 6. Miscellaneous

- A. PTSF's policy (AC-119, Site Surveyor Selection) outlines site surveyor qualifications, as well as "Conflicts of Interest" criteria.
- B. Many questions related to the process of becoming a trauma center are further defined within the Accreditation Policies of the PTSF. These policies are available on the PTSF website at [www.ptsf.org](http://www.ptsf.org).



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