



APPLICATION FOR SURVEY RESPONSES IN THE SETTING OF COVID-19 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The Pennsylvania Trauma System Foundation's (PTSF) Board of Directors and Staff recognize the COVID-19 pandemic impacted life in ways never experienced. During these times, temporary alterations of standard processes and care may have been necessary. When completing the Application for Survey (AFS), it is important to document the planned and typical processes that reflect normal operations, as well as the temporary adjustments utilized as a result of the pandemic. The following are a list of questions and answers to offer guidance for responses within the AFS to best demonstrate the effects of the pandemic within the trauma program.

In general, if the trauma program developed or modified a policy to be used temporarily during the COVID-19 crisis, attach the normal operations policy and the temporary policy to the AFS. Assure the dates (start and stop) for the utilization of the temporary policy are noted.

Questions not addressed in this document should be sent to Darlene Gondell, Manager of Accreditation, at dgondell@ptsf.org or Amy Krichten, Director of Accreditation, at akrichten@ptsf.org.

Re-Assignment and FTE Status

Standard 3: Trauma Program Medical Director; Standard 4: Trauma Program Manager; Standard 5: Registry; Standard 6: Performance Improvement & Patient Safety; Standard 8: Injury Prevention, Public Education & Outreach

The Trauma Program staff were re-assigned by the hospital to assist with the COVID-19 situation. How should I explain that they were not full time/dedicated in their trauma program role?

It is understandable that hospitals temporarily re-assigned staff during the pandemic. In the AFS response, include the FTE assigned during non-pandemic times. Then, in the comment field, briefly detail the dates (range) that the Trauma Program staff was re-assigned, briefly describe the duties/roles of the re-assignment and how it assisted the institution with the pandemic response efforts.

Trauma Credentialing

Standard 3: Trauma Program Medical Director; Standard 4: Trauma Program Manager; Standard 5: Registry; Standard 6: Performance Improvement & Patient Safety; Standard 10: Physicians; Standard 13: Nursing; Standard 25: Social Services; Standard 26: Case Management

Many trauma-related educational events were canceled or postponed. How should I explain the providers that did not complete the minimum number of continuing education hours in 2020 in the AFS?

Document the reasons that continuing education was not able to be completed by each of the providers who were not compliant. Virtually completing continuing education is a viable option to meet this standard. The explanation should include why virtual continuing education was not able to be employed. For example: conference/education canceled (include date), FTE reassignment, and/or medical leave.

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Providers scheduled to complete the ATLS, ACLS and/or PALS course (due to expiration or initial certification) did not attend as all courses were canceled due to efforts to reduce COVID-19. How should I explain this in the AFS?

Provide the date that the provider was registered/expected to take the course and details of the class being canceled and/or postponed. Describe the plan to complete the course. If the provider registered for a new class, include this date. Note, the ACS released certification extension details, please refer to <https://www.facs.org/quality-programs/trauma/atls/guidance>. If the ACS extension applies to a current certificate, enter the revised certificate expiration date into the AFS.

A Registrar hired within the past year was scheduled to complete the AAAM course, but it was canceled due to COVID-19. How should I explain this in the AFS?

Provide the date that the Registrar was registered to take the AAAM course and details of the class being canceled and/or postponed. Describe the plan to complete the AAAM course. If the Registrar registered for a new class, include this date.

A TPMD, TPM, Associate/PI Medical Director, or PI Coordinator appointed to their position within the past year was scheduled to complete the TOPIC course, but it was canceled due to COVID-19. How should I explain this in the AFS?

Provide the date that the individual was registered to take the TOPIC course and details of the class being canceled and/or postponed. Describe the plan to complete the TOPIC course. If the individual is registered for a new class, include this date.

Restrictions due to COVID-19 resulted in the hospital's in-person Trauma Nurse Course being canceled and/or postponed. The hospital has not had the personnel or resources to create a virtual version of the Trauma Nurse Course. Therefore, not all trauma identified nursing units/departments meet the minimum requirements for nurse completion of the Trauma Nurse Course. How should I explain this in the AFS?

Provide the scheduled date(s) of the hospital's Trauma Nurse Course and details of the classes being canceled and/or postponed. Include the number of nurses registered for the canceled/postponed course for each department/unit to demonstrate that the unit/department would have been in compliance if the course was not canceled/postponed. If the nurses are registered for a future Trauma Nurse Course, confirm the number of planned participants from the canceled course and the date.

Restrictions due to COVID-19 have resulted in nurses being unable to take an advanced nursing certification test. Therefore, not all trauma identified nursing units/departments meet the minimum requirements. How should I explain this in the AFS?

Provide the scheduled date(s) of each of the scheduled testing dates that were canceled and/or postponed. Confirm that each have or will have a test date re-scheduled. Include the number of nurses registered for a canceled/postponed test for each department/unit to demonstrate that the unit/department would have been in compliance if the test was not canceled/postponed.

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Standard 1: Commitment

The Trauma Activation Policy and Roles were adjusted with the COVID-19 situation. How should I explain that in the AFS?

Attach the policy documenting the typical activation policy, participants and roles and attach the temporary COVID-19 related activation policy, participants and roles. Document the dates reflecting the temporary change in policy.

Standard 2: Capacity & Ability

How should I explain the decrease in the number of PTOS qualified patients in 2020?

Detail the dates of the identified decrease in PTOS qualified patients and describe this in relation to the commonwealth restrictions and stay-at-home orders. Data supporting decreases in specific mechanisms of injury compared to the same time frame the previous year will be helpful in explaining the decrease was in relation to the pandemic. The Board will compare year-to-year and/or month-to-month for tracking and trending of volume.

How should I explain changes in transfer policy (transfer in/out) for patients during COVID 19?

Attach the normal operations plan/policy/guideline and then attach the temporary changes. If known, document the cases impacted by this temporary change.

How should I explain the institution conducting fewer than the minimum of 2 hospital disaster drills in 2020?

If the institution had dates scheduled for disaster drills in 2020 that were canceled and/or postponed, document the dates and the causes for the cancelation and/or postponement related to COVID-19.

Standard 5: Registry

The Registry fell below the timeliness of submission expectation of “85% submissions within 42 days” during the pandemic. How should I explain this in the AFS?

Detail the dates of the identified decrease in submission compliance within 42 days of discharge. Describe the identified reasons that submissions were not timely, and plans for improving submission compliance.

Standard 6: Performance Improvement & Patient Safety

The trauma death case submissions fell below the timeliness of submissions “100% within 90 days” expectation. How should I explain this in the AFS?

Detail the dates of the identified decrease in submission compliance within 90 days of discharge. Describe the identified reasons that submissions were not timely, and plans for improving submission compliance.

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Due to re-assigning providers to assist on the COVID-19 frontlines the frequency of PI Peer Review and/or Trauma Operations meetings was reduced. How should I explain this in the AFS?

The Standards of Accreditation allow for a trauma program to define the frequency of the PI Peer Review and/or Trauma Operations meetings. Include the frequency of the PI meeting during typical operations and the temporary frequency the Trauma Program decided to hold the meetings during the pandemic.

Due to re-assigning providers to assist on the COVID-19 frontlines some mandatory participants fell below the minimum required attendance for the PI Peer Review and/or Trauma Operations meeting. How should I explain this in the AFS?

Provide the dates that each of the non-compliant providers had not participated in a meeting, and the reason for not participating at each meeting. If the provider intended to participate but was involved in COVID-related patient care, include this rationale.

Standard 7: Continuing Education Programs

Restrictions due to COVID-19 resulted in canceling the hospital's trauma conference/educational session for internal and external audiences. How should I respond in the AFS?

Provide the scheduled date(s) of the hospital's trauma conference/educational session and details of the conference/educational session being canceled and/or postponed. If the conference/education session was postponed, include this re-scheduled date. If the hospital provided an alternative to the conference/educational session, include details of this alternative.

Restrictions due to COVID-19 resulted in canceling the hospital-hosted ATLS course in 2020. How should I explain this in the AFS?

Provide the scheduled date(s) of the hospital-hosted ATLS course and details of the class being canceled and/or postponed. If a new date(s) is scheduled, provide the new date(s).

Restrictions due to COVID-19 resulted in canceling the Rural Trauma Team Development Course. How should I explain this in the AFS?

Provide the scheduled date of the Rural Trauma Team Development Course and details of the class being canceled and/or postponed. If a new date is scheduled, provide the new date.

Standard 8: Injury Prevention, Public Education & Outreach

Restrictions due to COVID-19 postponed many of the injury prevention programs and classes. How should I explain this in the AFS?

Document each injury prevention program and class that was planned in 2020 and details of the programs/classes being canceled and/or postponed. If the creative alternatives to providing injury prevention outreach to the community occurred during the pandemic, describe them in the AFS.

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Standard 9: Research: Level I Trauma Centers Only

Due to re-assigning providers to assist with COVID-19, the hospital postponed some trauma-related research and therefore does not meet the minimum number of research articles/activities. How should I explain this in the AFS?

Provide details of the challenges faced in completing research. Include planned completion and/or publication, and the reason for the delay in completing the research or publication.

Restrictions due to COVID-19 resulted in conferences being canceled and therefore the minimum number of research presentations has not been met. How should I explain this in the AFS?

Provide the scheduled date(s) of research presentations and details of the forum being canceled and/or postponed. If the forum was postponed, include this re-scheduled date.

Standard 10: Physicians

To limit interaction with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 patients, telemedicine was utilized. How should I explain this in the AFS?

Detail the hospital's temporary COVID-19 plan of utilizing telemedicine including the date of decision, implementation, and discontinuation. The Trauma Program should do a PI review of telemedicine utilization on trauma patients, and document the findings.

Standard 13: Nursing

Due to the impact on COVID-19 on the hospital, including cohorting COVID-19 patients and staffing issues, non-trauma credentialed nurses provided care to trauma patients. How should I explain this in the AFS?

It is understandable that some hospitals created a designated unit for COVID-19 patients staffed with non-trauma credentialed nurses, and trauma patients with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 were placed in this unit. Document the typical staffing and admission plan. Then, describe details of the hospital's temporary COVID-19 plan, and the hospital's/trauma program's plan for suspected or confirmed COVID-19 trauma patients. The Trauma Program should do a PI review of trauma patients requiring placement in a unit that is not staffed with trauma credentialed nurses, and document the findings in the AFS.

Standards 16-21: Units/Department

The hospital reallocated patient rooms and nursing staff based on care needs. How to I document bed numbers and staffing plans/ratios in the AFS?

Provide the number of beds the unit/department is licensed for and the typical staffing plan for those beds under normal operating circumstances. Do not document bed/patient care assignment ratios during the COVID-19 period.

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Standard 22: Laboratory and Blood Bank

Due to blood shortages, the average number of blood products available in the blood bank decreased temporarily. What number should I include in the AFS?

Provide the number of each blood product that is typically available in the blood bank.

Due to blood shortages, the hospital revised the Massive Transfusion Protocol and/or Blood Bank policies. Should I include both policies?

Provide both types of policies and the dates that each were active. If the revised policy was temporary, please note this. Describe the indications for the revisions to the policy. The Trauma Program should do a PI review of the revised policies to ensure that they had not resulted in negative/unexpected outcomes, and document the findings in the AFS.