



Department of

Mental Health &

Substance Abuse Services

Licensure Virtual Inspections



What is a Virtual Inspection?

- A virtual inspection is an inspection that is completely 100% remotely conducted by licensure staff. A virtual inspection is completed in two (2) stages:
 - Stage 1: paperwork based review. Licensure staff will request specific documentation (i.e., policy & procedure manual, personnel and service recipient record information) for record compliance review.
 - Stage 2: video based walkthrough of the facility, if applicable. Licensee staff are to use video conferencing to visually show the facility to off-site licensure staff at licensure staff's direction for life/safety environment compliance review.

Please note: Stage 2 will NOT be applicable if you are licensed as an OBOT; DUI school; or PSSA



Why Virtual Inspections?

- The department shall make at least one (1) unannounced life safety and environmental inspection of each licensed service or facility yearly. The department shall inspect for quality standards all licensees that contract with the department as part of its contract monitoring. The department shall inspect for quality standards all licensees that do not contract with the department. The department may deem a service or facility in compliance without inspection if the service or facility meets another government agency's certification or accreditation requirements provided for in rules of the department. TCA 33-2-413(a)
- TDMHSAS Office of Licensure understands and appreciates the many different barriers you may be experiencing right now related to COVID-19 (otherwise known as “coronavirus”). We want you to know that we understand regulatory compliance during this time may be difficult with potential staffing shortages, programmatic disruptions and other frustrations that will be inherent during a public health crisis such as this. That said, please know that we all have legal mandates to uphold and are conducting these virtual inspections in accordance with these mandates. We will gladly give your organization reasonable allowances in time and accessibilities, so long as you sufficiently provide us information in what barriers and limitations you may be dealing with.
 - If you have questions about this balance, we would be happy to speak with you in more detail.

Tenn. Code Ann. § 33-2-413



Let's Begin!

- Licensure Surveyor in your region will reach out to you to begin the annual inspection process.
- Licensure Surveyor will provide you with a checklist prior to your inspection being conducted – this checklist will put you on notice of Stage 1 and Stage 2 material

0940-05 Licensure Rules: <https://publications.tnsosfiles.com/rules/0940/0940.htm>



Virtual Inspection: Stage 1

- During Stage 1, Licensure staff will be requesting records to conduct a desk audit, which shall include the following documentation:
 - client records,
 - personnel records, and
 - policy and procedure manual
- ***Please include complete client and personnel records***
- Please note Licensure emails with “[secure email]” in the subject line are encrypted, which allows a safe and secure way to share confidential information



Virtual Inspection: Stage 2

- During Stage 2, Licensure staff will be requesting a virtual walkthrough of your licensed facility
- Please identify a staff member who you want to participate in the virtual inspection so that Licensure staff may schedule a date and time for the virtual walkthrough
- Currently, Licensure staff are using the following approved electronic platforms to conduct the virtual walkthrough:
 - iPhone FaceTime;
 - Google Duo app; and
 - WebEx

NOTE: If you have a technology limitation, please notify your Licensure surveyor during Stage 1 so that Licensure may work with you to address these barriers.



Virtual Inspection: Stage 2 Examples

The Stage 2 life/safety environment compliance review may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Emergency lighting testing
- Measurement of windows and corridors
- General walkthrough of all licensed portions of the facility
- Review of first aid kit
- Review of Fire Extinguishers and Tags
- Review of staff and service recipient evacuation training and fire drills
- Ensure bedroom door will close to a positive latch
- Ensure interior and exterior steps are equipped with secure handrails



Virtual Inspection Helpful Tips

*Be sure to walk through the facility **slowly***

- Be sure that the person participating in the virtual inspection has necessary keys and access to storage rooms, closets, etc.
- Be sure to check the emergency lights/exit lights
- Be sure to show all exit points of the facility
- Be sure to show all electrical outlets
- Be sure to have a tape measure and/or other measuring device to conduct measurements, if needed
 - E.g., windows, hallways, etc.



Frequently Asked Questions

- What if the document/attachment I am trying to send via email is too large? **Please contact your Licensure Surveyor immediately so that we may discuss alternatives**
- What if my license is about to expire and my virtual inspection has not been conducted yet? **Your license will be extended and remain active and in good standing – this will not negatively impact on your licensure status**
- Will this virtual inspection be sufficient for my traditional annual inspection or will a follow-up onsite annual inspection be conducted? **This virtual inspection will satisfy the requirement for your traditional annual inspection**
- Will virtual inspections continue beyond COVID-19 concerns? **Licensure is unable to provide a definitive answer at this time as we are still discussing this with Executive Leadership**



COVID-19 Information

- For a list of statewide resources, please visit: [tn.gov/governor/covid-19.html](https://www.tn.gov/governor/covid-19.html)
- Tennessee Department of Health status of COVID-19 in Tennessee: <https://www.tn.gov/health/cedep/ncov.html>
- COVID-19 symptoms may be found on the CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/symptoms.html>
- General CDC information and guidance: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html
- Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services COVID-19 information: <https://www.tn.gov/behavioral-health/covid19.html>
- Guidance document for Congregate Care Providers: https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/mentalhealth/documents/TDMH_SAS_COVID-19_Congregate_Care_Settings.pdf



Regional Contact Information

East Tennessee:

520 West Summit Hill
Drive, Suite 502
Knoxville, TN 37902
Main Phone: (865)
594-6551
Complaint Line: (866)
777-1250
Fax Number: (844)
340-4482

Middle Tennessee:

500 Deaderick Street,
5th Floor
Nashville, TN 37243
Main Phone: (615)
532-6590
Complaint Line: (866)
797-9470
Fax Number: (615)
532-7856

West Tennessee:

951 Court Avenue
Memphis, TN 38103
Main Phone: (901)
543-7442
Complaint Line: (866)
344-0858
Fax: Number: (844)
844-5538



TDMHSAS thanks you for your hard work and dedication in continuing to provide exceptional services to some of the most vulnerable citizens of the State of Tennessee.



**State of TN Dept. of Mental Health
& Substance Abuse Services
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