



Long-Term Care Regulatory Provider Letter (PL)

Number: PL 18-17 (NF) (Replaces PL 00-17, PL 15-35, S&CC 05-13, and S&CC 10-02)
Title: Feeding Assistance Rules
Provider Types: Nursing Facilities (NF)
Date Issued: September 5, 2018

1.0 Background/History

Long Term Care Regulatory (LTCR) is undergoing a provider letter review process to condense and clarify provider communications. As part of that process, HHSC LTCR determined that the topic of feeding assistance required an updated and consolidated communication to providers.

2.0 Subject and Purpose

The Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) issues this letter to provide general guidance to nursing facilities (NF) in the use of staff (paid and unpaid) in assisting individuals with eating.

3.0 Policy Details & Provider Responsibilities

A paid feeding assistant is an individual who meets the requirements specified in the Texas Administrative Code¹, who is paid to feed residents by a facility, or who is used under an arrangement with another agency or organization.²

To feed residents, paid feeding assistants in NFs must successfully complete the state-approved [Feeding Assistant Training](#)³ course taught by a licensed health professional, and be properly supervised.⁴ Successful completion of the training means that a participant has participated in all 16 hours of the training, completed the supervised feeding practicum, and completed the reviews at the end of modules 2-8. The instructor or supervisory nurse evaluating the feeding practicum must assess the competency of the feeding assistant. However, there is no competency test for paid feeding assistants.

¹ 40 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) [§19.1113](#).

² 40 TAC [§19.101](#).

³ [The State Approved Training Curriculum](#) on the [Regulatory Services Nurse Aide Training and Competency Evaluation Program \(NATCEP\) web page](#).

⁴ 40 TAC [§19.1113\(a\)](#) and (b).

Nursing facilities may conduct the state approved feeding assistant training. Facilities may also contract with another nursing facility or educational provider such as a community college to provide the requisite training.

If a staff member has already completed the training in another facility, the staff member does not need to retake the training. The facility using the staff member as a feeding assistant must verify the completion of the training. Existing staff, such as clerical, dietary, and housekeeping staff, may feed residents upon successful completion of the training and if properly supervised. Only staff who provide direct feeding assistance must be trained as feeding assistants. Dietary service workers who pass out trays, provide beverages and condiments, talk to and encourage residents, and perform routine dining assistance do not need to be trained as feeding assistants.

Assistance with food and liquid may be provided by a paid feeding assistant at meal and non-meal times and must only be provided in the dining room for residents who have no complicated feeding problems⁵. Selecting a resident for feeding assistance must be based on the resident's latest assessment and care plan.⁶

Volunteers are encouraged to take the Feeding Assistant Training; however, they are not required to do so. The facility has the discretion to determine whether or not a volunteer must complete the training. Facilities are ultimately responsible for the care and safety of residents.

4.0 Forms/Appendices

None.

5.0 Contact Information

If you have any questions about this letter, please contact the Policy, Rules and Training Section at (512) 438-3161.

[signature on file]

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Long-term Care Regulatory
MTH:bn

⁵ 40 TAC [§19.1113\(b\)](#) and (c)(1).

⁶ 40 TAC [§19.1113\(c\)\(2\)](#), [§19.801\(2\)](#), [§19.802](#).