



## Physical Plant TRACER



A “tracer” is defined as a method used by an Accreditation Canada surveyor, by which the path of a client or an administrative process in a healthcare setting can be followed across the continuum of care. They can be referred to as either administrative or clinical tracers.

Prior to the tracer beginning, ask the surveyor if they would like a tour of the site. If yes, please provide them with one.

There are 4 main activities/stages during a tracer (stages are not independent nor sequential- some stages can occur at same time):

1. **Reviewing documentation:** Tracers may include reviewing documents such as preventative maintenance policies and processes, planning documents for construction/renovation projects with evidence of client and family feedback; and, back-up systems policies and processes. Have these documents readily available for surveyor to review.
  2. **Talking and Listening:** Tracers can involve the surveyor speaking to patients, staff, volunteers, etc. and listening to their responses. They may wish to speak with staff from the Work Place Health & Safety (WPH&S) team to discuss safety of the physical environment during their tour. Prepare the WPH&S team and ensure some members are on site during this tracer.
  3. **Observing Process and Procedures:** Tracers will include observing processes and procedures. Surveyors will talk with people on site. They may ask for policy and procedures. They are looking for consistency with information being gathered. They will be looking for cleanliness, accessibility, comfort and ease of navigation during the tour or when speaking with clients, staff or family members.
  4. **Recording:** Surveyors note their observations and share relevant information with other surveyors. If two pieces of information are contradictory, then a third piece of evidence is obtained.
- ➔ Tracers are flexible and customized – no two tracers are ever the same! Surveyors may share their expertise throughout the survey.
  - ➔ They may stop staff members to verify information and check compliance. They may verify the information in a variety of ways.
  - ➔ A surveyor may speak with patients and ask questions – about the perception of quality of care.
  - ➔ Tracers are unique and flexible.