



*Delaware Nursing Home Residents  
Quality Assurance Commission*

**EAGLES LAW STAFFING RATIO WAIVER  
APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS**

***Delaware  
Nursing Home  
Residents  
Quality  
Assurance  
Commission***

DNHRQAC's mission is to monitor Delaware's quality assurance system for nursing home residents in both privately operated and state operated facilities so that complaints of abuse, neglect mistreatment, financial exploitation and other complaints are responded to in a timely manner so as to ensure the health and safety of nursing home residents.

# *Delaware Nursing Home Residents Quality Assurance Commission*

## **History of Eagles Law**

The DNHRQAC was created in 1999 as part of a long-term care legislative package introduced by former Senator Robert Marshall and subsequently signed into law by the Governor. As part of this legislative package, the Division of Healthcare Quality (DHCQ), formerly known as the Division of Long-Term Care Residents Protection, was also created.

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**DISCLAIMER**



This training resource has been developed based on Delaware Code, current as of October 1, 2024, and is subject to change in response to State and/or Federal legislation.

# OBJECTIVES

1. Familiarize skilled nursing facilities with the DNHRQAC and specific relevant elements of Eagle's Law.
2. Orient facilities with the Eagle's Law Staffing Ratio Waiver process, as well as the role of the DHCQ and the DNHRQAC in the process, based on Delaware code.
3. Provide instructions and information to ensure all parties understand how to complete the form.

# Key Points

The staff waiver application is for use by skilled nursing facilities only.

In May 2023, the Joint Finance Committee added the following language to the Budget Epilogue: Section 187. "Long-term care facilities must continue to provide 3.28 hours of direct care per resident per day. However, the staffing ratios required in **16 Del.C.** §1162 are hereby suspended until July 1, 2024."

In June 2024, the Joint Finance Committee added the following language to the Budget Epilogue: Section 192. "Long-term care facilities must continue to provide 3.28 hours of direct care per resident per day. However, the staffing ratios required in **16 Del. C.** § 1162 are hereby suspended until ~~July~~ January 1, 2024-2025."

Effective 1/1/2025, the blanket staffing ratio waivers granted through State Budget Epilogue Language in 2023 and 2024 will no longer be effective.

The Delaware Nursing Home Residents Quality Assurance Commission will have the authority to grant such waivers to an individual facility based on an application submitted by the facility.

*Delaware Nursing Home Residents Quality Assurance Commission*  
**EAGLES LAW STAFFING RATIO WAIVER APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS**

Authority to approve waivers is granted through Delaware Code:

**16 DE CODE**, Chapter 11, § 1168. Waiver.

A residential health facility may seek from the Delaware Nursing Home Residents Quality Assurance Commission a time-limited waiver of the minimum staffing requirements required under §1162(c) and (e) of this title. Such waiver will only be granted upon a showing of exigent circumstances, including but not limited to documented evidence of the facility's best efforts to meet the minimum staffing requirements under §1162(c) and (e) of this title. Any such waiver will be time-limited and will include a plan and a timeline for compliance with this chapter. The Commission may seek input from the Department of Labor in terms of issues of labor availability in connection with any waiver request under this section.

# Steps to Complete Application Form

1

Facility completes Section A and submits to DHCQ & DNHRQAC.

2

DHCQ completes Section B and submits to DNHRQAC.

3

DNHRQAC reviews entire form and completes Section C.



*Delaware Nursing Home Residents Quality  
Assurance Commission*

# **APPLICATION FORM INSTRUCTIONS**

*Delaware Nursing Home Residents Quality Assurance Commission*  
**EAGLES LAW STAFFING RATIO WAIVER APPLICATION  
INSTRUCTIONS**

**SECTION A**

**To be completed by the skilled nursing  
facility.**

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**SECTION A, QUESTIONS 1-3**

1. Name and date of hire of current Nursing Home Administrator:  
Name and date of hire of current Director of Nursing:
  
2. Census: Total Beds:  
What census would allow you to meet the minimum staffing ratios?
  
3. Does your facility have a specialty or secured unit(s), if so, specify type(s) (dementia, ventilator; etc.) or provide specialty services (hemodialysis; rehab; etc.)? If so, please describe.

EAGLES LAW STAFFING RATIO WAIVER APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS  
**SECTION A, QUESTION 4**

4. Is your facility accepting new admissions?

If yes, what type of admissions? Check all that apply.

Long-term

Rehabilitation

Specialty:

When was the last resident admitted?

Has the facility restricted admissions in order to comply with the staffing ratio requirement? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, please provide details.

EAGLES LAW STAFFING RATIO WAIVER APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

## **SECTION A, QUESTION 5**

5. Describe situations at the facility within the last 90 days that have affected staffing (barriers to hiring, workforce reductions, change of ownership, etc.).

EAGLES LAW STAFFING RATIO WAIVER APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

## **SECTION A, QUESTIONS 6-7**

6. Are there certain days or shifts when you are having difficulty meeting the required staffing ratios?
  
7. Do you use agency personnel to ensure that you meet the minimum staffing requirements? Include a spreadsheet showing agency usage over the last 6 months (include RN Supervisor, RN, LPN and CNA). If you do not use agency staffing, please explain the reason you do not.

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**SECTION A, QUESTION 8**

8. If the facility does use agency staffing, please respond to the following:

Does the facility provide an orientation to new agency staff?  
If so, please describe orientation process.

Do new agency personnel work independently or with a “buddy”?  
Please explain.

# EAGLES LAW STAFFING RATIO WAIVER APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

## **SECTION A, QUESTIONS 9-11**

9. Does the facility utilize overtime to attempt to meet the staffing ratio requirement?  
If so, please include a spreadsheet showing overtime per classification (CNA, LPN, RN) for the last 6 months.
  
10. If your waiver is granted, what are your staffing ratio goals?  
(The facility must maintain a 3.28 HPRD. Be specific regarding your ratios for RNs, LPNs and CNAs on all shifts.)
  
11. What is your plan of correction to ensure that this does not happen again? Are there potential solutions or resources that could be put in place to solve or alleviate staffing shortages overall?



# EAGLES LAW STAFFING RATIO WAIVER APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

## **SECTION A, QUESTION 12-13**

12. What other supports are/may be available during the requested waiver period?

- Trainees from clinical programs.
- Volunteers (in what areas).
- Extra staff from other disciplines (AT, OT, PT, etc.).
- Staff from other disciplines working overtime.
- Any other supports.

13. Provide staff (CNA, LPN, RN) turnover per quarter for the past year.

- What is the hourly starting salary for each position type?
- What actions has the facility taken to improve staff retention in the past year?

*Delaware Nursing Home Residents Quality Assurance Commission*  
**EAGLES LAW STAFFING RATIO WAIVER APPLICATION  
INSTRUCTIONS**

**SECTION B**

**To be completed by the DHCQ.**

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## **SECTION B, QUESTIONS 1-2**

1. Does this facility have a history of citations, staffing problems, fines in the last 2 years? (Please include any pertinent information for the DHNRQAC to consider.)
2. Attach the facility staffing numbers (ratios and HPRD) for the last 6 months, as routinely determined by the DHCQ.

# EAGLES LAW STAFFING RATIO WAIVER APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

## **SECTION B, QUESTIONS 3-5**

3. Have any staffing-related complaints (lack of staff, avoidable pressure ulcers, failure to change incontinent products, dehydration, falls, medication errors, healthcare associated infections, etc.) been filed against the facility in the past year? If so, please attach the complaint(s) and any investigation/survey.
4. Any other information the DHCQ feels would be appropriate for the DNHRQAC to consider regarding the approval/denial of a request for staffing ratio waiver?
5. Does DHCQ recommend approval of the staffing ratio waiver request?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

*Delaware Nursing Home Residents Quality Assurance Commission*  
**EAGLES LAW STAFFING RATIO WAIVER APPLICATION  
INSTRUCTIONS**

**SECTION C**

**To be completed by the DNHRQAC.**

EAGLES LAW STAFFING RATIO WAIVER APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS  
**SECTION C, QUESTIONS 1-2**

1. Patterns of non-compliance and staffing issues are noted. YES\_\_\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_\_\_ If so, explain.
  
2. The Nursing Home Administrator or the Director of Nursing has changed within the last year. YES\_\_\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_\_\_ If so, when (if more than once include all dates that apply)?

# EAGLES LAW STAFFING RATIO WAIVER APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

## **SECTION C, QUESTIONS 3-5**

3. The facility has used agency staff and employee overtime within the last year to meet the minimum staffing ratio requirement.

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

If so, note percentage of RN, LPN and CNA agency staff utilized and the amount of overtime used.

4. Has the facility limited admissions in order to meet the minimum staffing ratio requirement? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

5. Is their underlying cause explanation realistic and thorough? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

Explain.

EAGLES LAW STAFFING RATIO WAIVER APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS  
**SECTION C, QUESTIONS 6-7**

6. Are proposed solutions realistic, sufficient, sustainable, measurable and actionable?

YES\_\_\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_\_\_ Explain.

7. Waiver is APPROVED\_\_\_\_\_ DENIED\_\_\_\_\_



*Delaware Nursing Home Residents Quality Assurance Commission*  
**EAGLES LAW STAFFING RATIO WAIVER APPLICATION**

# **Additional Instructions & Guidance**

# EAGLES LAW STAFFING RATIO WAIVER APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

- Facilities must note on the application if this is the first waiver application submitted by the facility. If it is not the first application, facilities should note the date of the previous application(s) and whether it was/they were approved.
- All sections of the form must be signed and dated by the person completing the form.
- Facilities must attach a copy of the most recent facility assessment as directed by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (see details at F838, 483.71 and Memo QSO-24-13-NH).
- Facilities will complete Section A and forward the form electronically to the Director of the DHCQ and the DNHRQAC Executive Director (contact information on next page).

# EAGLES LAW STAFFING RATIO WAIVER APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Division of Healthcare Quality (DHCQ)

**DHSS\_DHCQ\_Staffing@delaware.gov**

Delaware Nursing Home Residents Quality  
Assurance Commission (DNHRQAC)

**EaglesLawWaiver@delaware.gov**



# *Next Steps*

Once submitted, DNHRQAC will keep the completed Section A on file for informational purposes.

DHCQ will complete Section B within 5 working days of receipt and will forward the completed Sections A and B to the DNHRQAC.

DNHRQAC will complete review of the form within 10 working days of receipt and will respond to the facility with a copy to the DHCQ.

# EAGLES LAW STAFFING RATIO WAIVER APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

- Staff ratio waiver requests will be granted for a maximum of 90 days.
- Waivers may be renewed for an additional 90 days (total 180 days) with sufficient evidence that there has been improvement or that measures have failed and other avenues for resolving staffing issues have been/are being implemented/proposed.
- The waiver will be terminated immediately if it is discovered that the facility failed to comply with the term(s) of the waiver.

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**EAGLES LAW STAFFING RATIO WAIVER APPLICATION  
INSTRUCTIONS**

**Important  
Reminders**

## **EAGLES LAW STAFFING RATIO WAIVER APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS**

A waiver is granted for a specific timeframe and the response from the DNHRQAC will include the start and end date for the waiver.

The DHCQ has the authority to enforce staffing ratios for Skilled Nursing Facilities effective 1/1/2025.

## **EAGLES LAW STAFFING RATIO WAIVER APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS**

Waivers may be granted by the DNHRQAC for staffing ratios only. Facilities must continue to meet the required hours per resident per day (HPRD) of care.

The facility must continue to provide adequate staffing to meet the individualized needs of each facility resident.



**Thank you!**

**Questions?**