

This document is provided as guidance and is not a legal document. It does not override or replace the need to be familiar with rules. Current rules may be found on [the DLBC website](#).

The inspection process

The Office of Licensing (OL) is responsible for ensuring regulated child care, health facilities, and human services programs operate in compliance with established rules and regulations. Programs are monitored using a variety of methods, but one of the most direct is conducting an inspection at the facility where services are provided.

OL staff who conduct inspections are referred to as *licensors*. Each program is assigned to a licensor's caseload, meaning that licensor is responsible to conduct that program's inspections and overall assessment.

Inspections are almost always conducted onsite, as this enables licensors to make observations of daily operations and closely inspect the physical environment directly. Outside of inspections, a program's assigned licensor is generally available to provide technical assistance and answers to compliance-related questions.

General process

OL regulates programs with a wide variety of scope and services. The way any particular inspection is conducted will be heavily influenced by the type of program being inspected. The purpose of this document is not to provide highly specific instruction on how an inspection will take place, but to provide information that will give a generalized understanding of the inspection process.

The purpose of conducting an inspection is for your licensor to get a snapshot of what daily operations at the facility look like. During an inspection, your licensor will be checking to make sure clients are being treated with dignity, respect, and fairness, and that all their health and safety needs are being met.

The following are some general actions you may expect your licensor to take during an inspection:

- Physically inspect all indoor and outdoor areas. This may include inspecting areas clients do not ordinarily have direct access to, to make sure clients are not found in those areas.
- Assess the safety of items and areas that clients can access. This may involve inspecting the contents of drawers, cupboards, or closets if they are accessible to clients.
- Check for the presence of illegal items.
- Confirm that each employee has completed a background check.
- Review required records and documentation.
- Inspect any vehicles being used for client transportation.

Collecting photographic documentation, written statements, or audio recordings during a routine inspection is not standard practice, but may be deemed necessary in some cases. It may also be necessary in some instances for your licensor to temporarily pause the inspection process to consult with their supervisor or reference official documentation.

In many cases, licensors are capable of conducting inspections independently. In certain circumstances, additional licensors may be brought in during an inspection to make sure the process is efficient.

Inspection frequency

OL conducts inspections on set schedules based on regulations and legislative requirements. Some inspections are required to be conducted without notice. While you may not always be aware of when a particular inspection will take place, your licensor will conduct their inspections in accordance with Utah code and internal policies and procedures.

Inspection length

The length of time an inspection takes is also highly variable. While inspecting a home with a handful of clients may only take a few hours, inspecting a program operating across multiple facilities, with a variety of specialties/departments, with potentially hundreds of clients, may take multiple days.

OL licensors strive to be as unobtrusive to daily operations as possible during inspections, but must also perform their due diligence to accurately assess the program and client safety. Generally speaking, the more instances of noncompliance found during an inspection, the longer the inspection will take.

Inspection types

OL conducts different types of inspections for different purposes. The following are some of the most common types of inspections conducted by OL:

Pre-license inspection

Before issuing a license, OL will verify that each program is in compliance with necessary rules and regulations. This process typically involves a licensor conducting a pre-license inspection. During this inspection, the licensor has the opportunity to inspect the physical location where services will be provided, review certain documents, and interview the provider/administrator of the program.

Pre-license inspections will be scheduled with the provider or program administrator ahead of time. Most programs will not be able to receive a license (and therefore begin or continue operations) until after a pre-license inspection has been completed.

Announced inspection

One of the most common types of inspections conducted by OL is an announced inspection. When an inspection is announced, it means the program's administration has been notified by their assigned licensor of when the inspection will take place. Often, announced inspections are scheduled in coordination with the program's schedule, so there is some flexibility in terms of when it will take place.

Generally, an announced inspection will be a full inspection of the program. What a full inspection entails will depend on the type of program being inspected, but usually includes all of the procedures detailed in the *General process* section included earlier in this document.

Unannounced inspection

The other most common type of inspection is an unannounced inspection. An unannounced inspection is virtually the same as an announced inspection in all aspects, other than it being scheduled with the program ahead of time. Program administrators will not be notified of when an unannounced inspection is scheduled to take place.

By conducting unannounced inspections in tandem with those that are announced, OL is better able to get an accurate picture of what daily operations look like.

Follow-up inspection

When a rule or requirement is assessed as noncompliant during an inspection, licensors are responsible for conducting an unannounced follow-up. During a follow-up inspection, licensors will generally only inspect the specific items that were previously assessed as noncompliant. This means that follow-up inspections tend to be shorter than full-length announced or unannounced inspections.

In some instances, if a noncompliance is corrected during the initial inspection, a follow-up may not be required. In many circumstances though, although a noncompliance may have been corrected during the initial inspection, licensors may still be required to conduct a follow-up to make sure that compliance was maintained following the conclusion of the inspection.

Focus inspection

Focus inspections are similar to follow-up inspections in that only a few items will be inspected by the licensor. The difference is that focus inspections are conducted when there may be specific concerns at a program unrelated to noncompliance at a prior inspection or the report of a concern from the public.

An example of when a focus inspection may be conducted is if there are concerns with an employee's background check. A focus inspection may be conducted to verify the employee is no longer present at the program or interacting with clients in inappropriate ways.

Investigation inspections

Outside the standardized inspections detailed above, OL also has the right and responsibility to investigate concerns reported in regard to a program's compliance or threat to client health and safety. Unlike prior inspections, investigation inspections can be far more diverse and nuanced.

Within OL, there is a specialized team of individuals trained to investigate complaints and critical incidents. This means that if an investigation inspection is necessary, it will not typically be your assigned licensor who conducts the investigation, but rather an individual from this team.

During an inspection

For maintaining consistency, organization, and efficiency during inspections, licensors use a standardized checklist. This tool is designed to capture all relevant data and notes for the inspection being conducted. While some information may be entered into the tool prior to the on-site visit, it is primarily completed during the inspection itself. The tool may contain various sections, but its core function is typically a structured list of rules, which allows the licensor to document whether rules are compliant or non-compliant. Due to the narrowed focus of investigation inspections, checklists are not used for these types of inspections.

Program staff duties

You may wonder what you should be doing during an inspection taking place at your facility. Largely speaking, the expectation during an inspection is that you continue to perform your regularly assigned duties as is standard. Remember, the intent of an inspection is for your licensor to get a picture of what normal operations look like.

In some instances, your licensor may request the assistance of administrative staff during an inspection. This is largely to facilitate a smoother process. If there is a dedicated staff member available to provide the licensor access to areas of the facility, required documents, or to be directly informed of noncompliance, the licensor will generally be able to conduct the inspection more quickly and efficiently.

Inspection conclusion

After your licensor has finished conducting their inspection, they will meet with the provider or program administrator to discuss the results of the inspection. The licensor will review any concerns or noncompliance assessed during their inspection. If any particular instance of noncompliance was not corrected during the inspection, the licensor will establish a **date of correction**. This date indicates when a noncompliant rule must be corrected. While recommendations may be offered in regard to this date, ultimately, the licensor will be the one who establishes any date of correction necessary.

After reviewing this information, the licensor will send a copy of the data collected during the inspection to their supervisor and enter notes and details from the inspection into the OL database. If the licensor assessed any instance of noncompliance during their inspection, the system will generate a document known as an **inspection report**.

Inspection reports are the official summary of an inspection. They detail anything that was found out of compliance and what corrective actions are being issued by OL for noncompliance.

Providers have **15 calendar days** from when they receive an inspection report in which to request an appeal. For more information about this process, refer to the **Informal dispute resolutions and appeals** document.

For more information about the process used by OL to issue corrective actions, refer to the [Office of Licensing guidelines for corrective actions and civil money penalties](#).