



Jonathan Rosenfeld's Nursing Homes Abuse Blog

How Much Do Nursing Home Need To Be Fined In Order To Clean Up Their Acts

Posted by [Jonathan Rosenfeld](#) on May 10, 2011

Many of my [blog entries](#) focus on sad incidents where a nursing home patient has received seemingly horrific care during an admission to a nursing home. Many of these incidents indeed get investigated by state agencies and--- in some cases-- the facilities receive a fine.

Most nursing home fines are controlled by individual states. However, even within each state, the fines are indeed arbitrary. I mean what is the cutoff between a nursing home getting fined \$5,000, \$10,000 or \$20,000? Sure there may be varying degrees of [patient injury](#) or culpable behavior on the part of the facility, but ultimately the fines imposed may have little impact on their intent--- to punish facilities for past events and to deter future problems.

Sadly, for some nursing home operators, the fines--regardless of their size-- have become part of doing business. However, my guess is that at some point-- when the

Jonathan Rosenfeld represents victims of nursing home abuse and neglect throughout the country. For more information please visit Nursing Homes Abuse Blog (www.nursinghomesabuseblog.com), Bed Sore FAQ (www.bedsorefaq.com) or call Jonathan directly at (888) 424-5757 (www.rosenfeldinjurylawyers.com).

finer begin to grow in their significance, facilities would start to take notice and perhaps act with greater care?

I suggest this because many of the fines imposed are simply inadequate for their intentions-- to improve patient care.

California has some of the highest fines imposed against nursing homes, yet the troubles in [California nursing homes](#) have not been put to rest.

Just recently, officials from the California Department of Public Health hit San Francisco Nursing Center with a \$100,000 fine for failing to protect a patient at their facility. The incident involved a CNA who suffocated an elderly patient with a pillow at the facility. Most disturbingly, this was the CNA's first day working at the nursing home.

There's no doubt that \$100,000 is indeed quite a bit of money, but is the fine enough to force the way this facility-- and others-- handle freshly hired employees at their facility? Perhaps requiring all new employees to undergo sensitivity training and undergo a shadowing period where they accompany a senior employee for an extended 'break in' period?

My guess is 'no', but I'm curious as to your thoughts about the need for stiffer nursing home fines. Dare I suggest that if the fine were \$250,000 or \$500,000 or more, we would likely see more facilities scrambling to improve their care or be forced to shut their doors.

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