



Guidance on Email Use for NHSN and SAMS Registration

I. Overview:

The National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN) is a healthcare-associated infection tracking system. Long-term care facilities enrolling in the NHSN must first begin the process by identifying an employee at the facility to be responsible for entering information and data into the system. This employee would gain access to the NHSN applications after registering with the CDC's Secure Access Management Services (SAMS), a federal informational technology (IT) system that gives authorized personnel secure access to non-public CDC applications.

It is important to note that SAMS registration is owned by the employee registering and NOT the facility.

II. Guidance for SAMS Accounts with Generic Email Addresses:

When enrolling a facility in the NHSN or when adding a new user in an enrolled NHSN facility, employees must provide a valid email address. This email address will be used to receive correspondence from the NHSN and to gain access to the NHSN through SAMS. It is strongly recommended that employees use their own company email address (e.g., firstnamelastname@organization.org) and NOT a generic email address (e.g., genericDON@organization.org) since the e-mail address will be used as a unique identifier to gain access to the system.

If a facility is unable to provide an individualized or unique email address to the employee responsible for entering data into NHSN and a generic email address (e.g., genericDON@organization.org) is used, the facility is ultimately responsible for working with the employee to: (1) delete their SAMS account or (2) remove the generic email address from their SAMS account once they leave and are no longer employed at the facility (see details below). **The SAMS user support team is not able to delete an existing account unless the account holder (i.e. employee) contacts them directly.**

- Prior to an employee leaving, the facility should work with the employee holding the SAMS account to either:
 1. Delete the SAMS account associated with the generic email address *or*
 2. Change the email address associated with the former employee's SAMS account. *This may be preferable if the former employee still needs access to SAMS in their new position at a different facility.
- If the former employee is unable to be contacted to change or delete the generic email address associated with the SAMS account:
 1. The facility must create a new email (to be used as a unique identifier or username) for the next employee applying for NHSN access through SAMS.



Frequently Asked Questions:

1. Q. Does the facility apply for a SAMs account?

A. *No, an **employee** at a facility or organization entering data into the NHSN would apply individually for a SAMS account. Therefore, each SAMS account is owned by the individual who completes the SAMS registration process.*

2. Q. Does an employee have to provide personal information when opening a SAMS account?

A. *Yes, each SAMS account is owned by an individual thus, the employee has to provide personalized information (e.g., email address, password, applicants/employee's home address, etc.).*

3. Q. Can a facility just apply for a SAMS account instead of an individual employee?

A. *No, facilities cannot apply for a SAMS account. Each SAMS user must review and accept the NHSN Rules of Behavior. For security reasons, it is extremely important that all NHSN users individually undergo the secure enrollment process.*

4. Q. Can an individual with a SAMS account just share their credentials with others in the facility?

A. *No, only the user who underwent the SAMS registration process (and accepted the NHSN Rules of Behavior) should have access to their account for security purposes. Each SAMS account is owned by the individual who enrolled and thus, they are responsible for all activity under their account. Under no circumstances should employees share their GRID cards or other protected information with other personnel. Each employee needing access to NHSN should open their own SAMS account and proceed through the credentialing process.*

5. Q. If an employee leaves a facility, is their SAMs account automatically terminated?

A. *No, each SAMS account is owned by an individual. Thus, if an employee leaves a facility, they still have access to their SAMS account. However, a facility can and should deactivate the employee's NHSN profile to disable further access to the facility's NHSN account.*



6. Q. Can an employee use their own personal email address (e.g., gmail account) to enroll in SAMS?

A. There are no email address restrictions when applying for a SAMS account (i.e., any functional email account may be used), and each facility should develop their own policy for use of non-facility email addresses. It is important to note however, that all NHSN communications are sent to the email address used to register with SAMS. Thus, if a personal email address is used, employees should have access to their personal email (e.g., gmail account) during work hours in order to receive timely and up-to-date information sent by the NHSN.

7. Q. If an employee with SAMS/NHSN access is transferring to another facility, but still needs their SAMS account, would they have to recreate an account at the new facility?

A. Not necessarily, the user enrolling in SAMS owns their SAMS account, so they may transfer that account to a new facility. However, it is their responsibility to ensure they have access to the email address used to create the account. If they will no longer have access to the email account once they are no longer employed at the facility, the EMPLOYEE must change their email in SAMS to another functioning email (e.g., either the new facilities email or a personal email address such as gmail).