Environmental tour checklist for endoscope reprocessing areas

Physical space:
- Is the area sized appropriately in relation to the volume of equipment processed?
- Do staff put on personal protective equipment (PPE) before entering the area?
- Are staff wearing suitable PPE?
- Is there sufficient work space?
- Are cleaning supplies, storage areas, and other critical items clearly labeled?
- Is there an appropriate hand washing station?
- Is there an appropriate eyewash station?
- Are “dirty” areas physically separated from “clean” ones?
- Are there suitable storage areas for cleaned endoscopes?
- On visual inspection, do these areas look clean, free of debris and dry?
- If a cabinet serves as storage, does the cabinet have doors?
- Are endoscope storage containers dry and located off the ground?
- What is the route from the processor to the cabinet? (The route should not cross through the soiled processing area.)

Ventilation:
- Is there negative air pressure to surrounding areas?
- Are air exchange rates and filtration efficiencies appropriate? Are there a minimum of 10 exchanges per hour, with at least two being with fresh, outside air?
- Is exhaust vented directly outside?

Documentation and training:
- Are staff aware of the number of endoscopes in the department?
- Does staff know how frequently these are maintained and how that maintenance occurs?
- When staff members are questioned, can they show where evidence-based practices and guidelines are located?
- When staff are asked about their training, does it appear they were trained using the guidelines?
- Are staff given periodic refresher training?
• Establish regular and effective endoscope maintenance: Conduct a risk assessment to determine the correct maintenance strategy. Confirm that organization policy is followed; Joint Commission surveyors will examine how your organization determines appropriate maintenance and verify that it occurs according to this policy. Note: If a vendor handles maintenance, an in-house person should be aware of and document how endoscopes are tested and maintained.

• Remain vigilant: Do not take proper endoscope reprocessing lightly. The long term effects of poor processes and an unsafe environment are severe. Working in partnership with IC and clinical staff, EC professionals should ensure that these critical tools remain safe, clean, and ready for use every time they are needed.

To read the entire article, see the April 2014 issue of Joint Commission Perspectives. (Contact: George Mills, gmills@jointcommission.org or Lisa Waldowski, lwaldowski@jointcommission.org)

Resources

New: ISMP adds OTC drug safety information to ConsumerMedSafety.org
The Institute for Safe Medication Practices (ISMP) recently added an over-the-counter (OTC) drug safety section to its consumer website. Given the increasingly vital role of OTC medicines, the new OTC safety section will educate consumers about potential adverse events when using OTC medicines and how to avoid problems. The website and the new section bring crucial medication safety information directly to consumers using a wide variety of medication safety articles, useful safety tools and resources, and access to a consumer medication error reporting system. (Contact: Jennifer Gold, jgold@ismp.org)

New on the web
• Blog posts:
  o JC Physician Blog - Taking care of my parents. Ana Pujols McKee, M.D., executive vice president and chief medical officer, discusses the practice of ordering dangerous tests for frail elderly patients who do not want them and what should be done about it.
  o Musings...Ambulatory Patient Safety: Focusing on provider-performed microscopy procedure requirements for ambulatory health care.

• Podcast: Take 5 with The Joint Commission: Guest access delivers free resources to customers. Ann Scott Blouin, Ph.D., R.N., executive vice president of Customer Relations, explains the resources available via guest access on the Joint Commission Connect extranet.

• Advancing Effective Communication, Cultural Competence, and Patient-and Family-Centered Care: Standards, monographs, videos and other resources.

• The Joint Commission enterprise’s key accomplishments of 2013

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