

The SAFER™ Matrix and Changes to the Post-Survey Process

As announced in the May 2016 *Perspectives*, The Joint Commission is conducting a series of interrelated process improvement projects known as Project REFRESH. This multiphase undertaking includes the Survey Analysis for Evaluating Risk™ (SAFER™) matrix, a transformative approach for identifying and communicating risk levels associated with deficiencies cited during accreditation surveys and certification reviews. As a reminder, **all accreditation and certification** programs will begin receiving the SAFER matrix in their reports **as of January 1, 2017**.

The SAFER matrix (*see* Figure 1 on page 3) will replace the current scoring methodology based on predetermined categorizations (Category A or Category C; direct or indirect impact) of elements of performance (EPs), allowing surveyors and reviewers to perform real-time, on-site evaluations of deficiencies and their associated risk. Surveyors and reviewers will place each Requirement for Improvement (RFI) within the matrix according to the likelihood of the issue to cause harm to patients, staff, or visitors and according to the scope of a cited deficiency. This approach provides one comprehensive visual representation of the survey or review findings and is designed to help organizations prioritize and focus corrective actions.

Figure 2 on page 3 explains how RFI placement on the matrix drives the organization's post-survey follow-up process. As shown, the submission time frame for Evidence of Compliance (ESC) for all findings placed within the matrix is 60 days (the 45-day submission required for EPs formerly cited as direct impact will be eliminated). Findings identified as high risk (those placed in the dark orange and red boxes) will require additional information within the ESC to demonstrate that an organization will sustain the corrective actions. These findings will also be proactively shared with surveyors and reviewers for potential review on subsequent on-site surveys up to and including the next full survey event.

With the move to the SAFER matrix,

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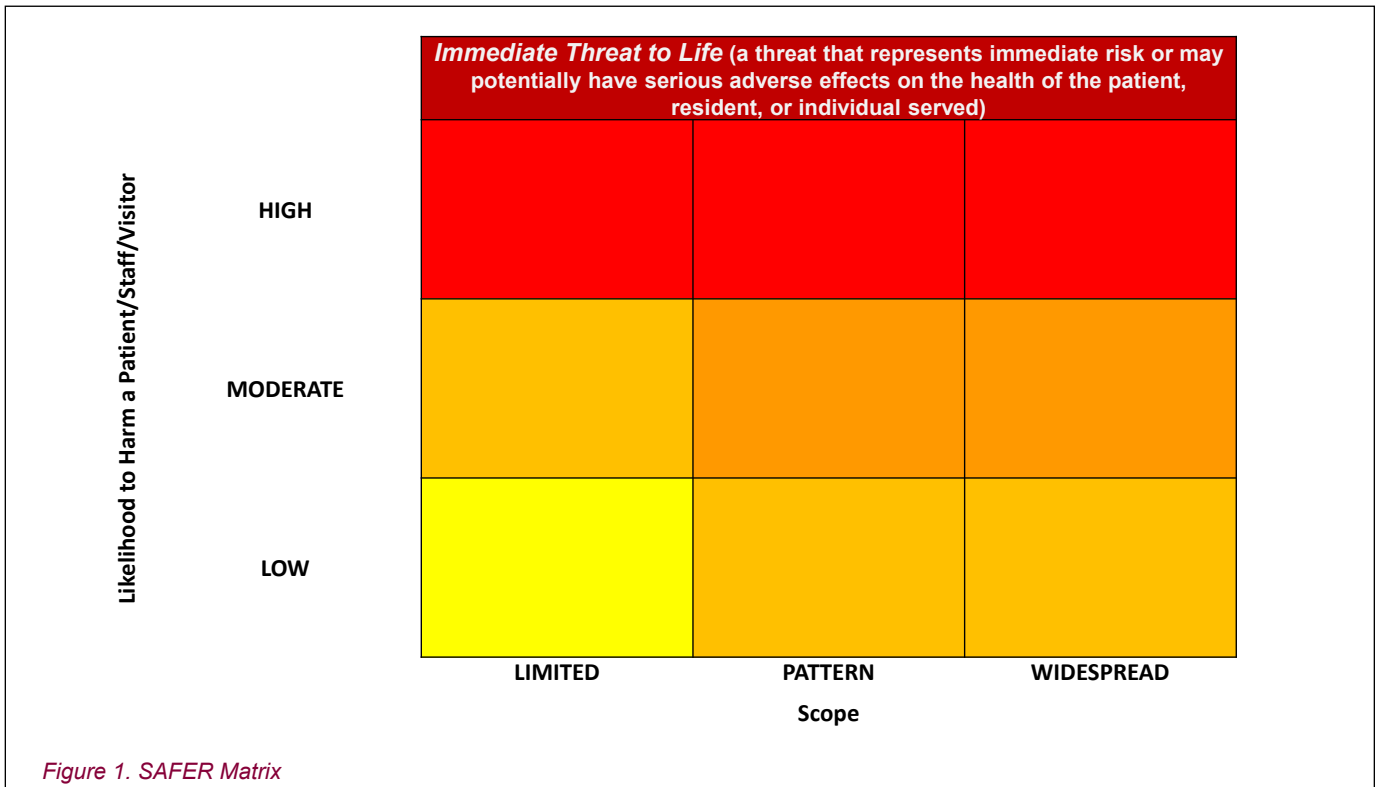


Figure 1. SAFER Matrix

SAFER Matrix™ Placement	Required Follow-up Activity
<u>HIGH/LIMITED,</u> <u>HIGH/PATTERN,</u> <u>HIGH/WIDESPREAD</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 60-day Evidence of Standards Compliance (ESC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ESC will include Who, What, When, and How sections ESC will also include two additional areas surrounding Leadership Involvement and Preventive Analysis Finding will be highlighted for potential review by surveyors on subsequent on-site surveys up to and including the next full triennial survey
<u>MODERATE/PATTERN,</u> <u>MODERATE/WIDESPREAD</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 60-day Evidence of Standards Compliance (ESC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ESC will include Who, What, When, and How sections ESC will also include two additional areas surrounding Leadership Involvement and Preventive Analysis Finding will be highlighted for potential review by surveyors on subsequent on-site surveys up to and including the next full triennial survey
<u>MODERATE/LIMITED,</u> <u>LOW/PATTERN,</u> <u>LOW/WIDESPREAD</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 60-day Evidence of Standards Compliance (ESC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ESC will include Who, What, When, and How sections
<u>LOW/LIMITED</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 60-day Evidence of Standards Compliance (ESC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ESC will include Who, What, When, and How sections

Note: If an Immediate Threat to Health and Safety, also known as Immediate Threat to Life (ITL), is discovered during a survey, the organization immediately receives a Preliminary Denial of Accreditation (PDA) and, within 72 hours, must either entirely eliminate the ITL or implement emergency interventions to abate the risk to patients (with a maximum of 23 days to totally eliminate the ITL). Please see "The Accreditation Process" (ACC) chapter within the Comprehensive Accreditation Manual for more information.

Figure 2. Placement of RFI on SAFER Matrix and Follow-Up Activity

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the current 10-day post-survey clarification opportunity will remain. The clarification process will continue to serve as an opportunity to submit clarifying evidence if an organization was in compliance with a particular standard at the time of survey. However, the clarification process is not intended to be an opportunity to challenge the professional judgment of the surveyors and reviewers or to dispute the placement of findings on the SAFER matrix.

Some aspects of the post-survey process will not remain. In addition to eliminating the Category A, Category C, and direct and indirect impact designations, the SAFER approach will eliminate the use of Measures of Success (MOS). The sidebar at right provides details on how the MOS requirement will be eliminated. In addition, because Category C EP designations will be eliminated, Opportunities for Improvement (single observations of noncompliance at Category C EPs) will also be eliminated.

The SAFER matrix is meant to be utilized as a tool in the survey process to illustrate potential risk areas at the organization. It will not be used in isolation to drive or determine if certain decision rules will be applied. The SAFER matrix also will not impact the process used on site to determine a Condition Level Deficiency or the declaration of an Immediate Threat to Health and Safety.

Removal of MOS

Measures of Success (MOS), quantifiable measures typically related to an audit determining whether an action is effective and sustained for certain Category C EPs, will be eliminated for all accreditation and certification organizations effective January 1, 2017.

Organizations that have an MOS due in 2016 are still required to submit the MOS. However, organizations that have an MOS that is due on or after January 1, 2017, are *not* required to submit it.

If these organizations wish to enter or print the data for their own internal improvement efforts, the MOS tool will stay open on their extranet site through the end of 2016.

Although the MOS tool will close as of January 1, 2017, organizations are encouraged to continue to monitor the effectiveness of their corrective actions through future measurement as they find value in doing so.

For more information, please contact your organization's assigned Account Executive or review the resource documents located on the extranet site under the Survey Process tab. 