In this issue

Revisions for Life Safety, Environment of Care chapters effective January 2018
New Standards FAQs on bilingual providers serving as interpreters for fellow providers
EC News Brief: Compliance tips for monitoring temperatures in lab equipment
Don’t miss this — Webinar replay out now on Pioneers in Quality™: Proven Practices Collection
Build a safer environment: Participate in Safe + Sound Week

Accreditation

Revisions for Life Safety, Environment of Care chapters effective January 2018
In 2016, The Joint Commission revised the Life Safety (LS) and Environment of Care (EC) chapters for the Behavioral Health Care, Laboratory, Nursing Care Centers and Office-Based Surgery accreditation programs, based on the adoption of the 2012 editions of the National Fire Protection Association’s NFPA 101: Life Safety Code and NFPA 99: Health Care Facilities Code.

The Joint Commission began surveying to the 2012 Codes in November 2016. In the November issue of Perspectives, The Joint Commission shared that additional standards revisions would be published in 2017. These additional revisions to the LS and EC chapters include new, revised and relocated elements of performance (EPs) that address topics, such as the following:

- Testing of emergency lighting systems
- Inspection and testing of piped medical gas and vacuum systems
- Updating pertinent NFPA code numbering in references
- Adding more specificity to existing EPs

These changes will be effective Jan. 1, 2018 and will be posted on The Joint Commission website. (Contact: Kenneth A. Monroe, kmonroe@jointcommission.org)

New Standards FAQs on bilingual providers serving as interpreters for fellow providers
New FAQs have been posted to The Joint Commission’s website to provide clarification to the following question:
If the bilingual provider (physician, nurse, etc.) serves as an interpreter for a fellow provider (i.e., the patient and provider speak different languages and a bilingual provider is facilitating communication between them), does the requirement found at HR.01.02.01 EP 1 apply?

- Hospital and hospital clinics
- Critical access hospitals
- Ambulatory health care
- Behavioral health care
- Home care
- Nursing care center
- Office-based surgery

EC News Brief: Compliance tips for monitoring temperatures in lab equipment
In a new recurring feature, Joint Commission Online will share tips from Joint Commission Resources’ Environment of Care News, which covers issues related to Environment of Care (EC), Emergency Management, and Life Safety (LS) standards. This inaugural installment focuses on Standard EC.02.04.03 for laboratories.
During 2016, 27.5 percent of surveyed laboratories were found to be noncompliant with EC.02.04.03, which requires laboratories to inspect, test and maintain laboratory equipment. Of those, nearly 19 percent cited noncompliance with EP 10, which requires the laboratory to monitor temperature-controlled spaces and equipment at frequencies established by the laboratory, using manufacturers’ guidelines. The temperature also must be documented.

Temperature is the most sensitive factor in a laboratory; monitoring and documenting the temperature is a continuous effort. Staff must establish tolerance limits for equipment temperatures and other monitored conditions that are consistent with manufacturers’ guidelines and the laboratory’s policies and procedures. This also should include a daily record of temperatures and conditions (humidity, pressure, air flow, and so forth). Any corrective actions taken to adjust out-of-range temperatures should be documented.

The Joint Commission offers the following tips for maintaining compliance with EC.02.04.03, EP 10:

- Ensure that temperatures, inspections, and preventive maintenance are recorded in accordance with policy.
- Train multiple staff members to take temperatures, perform alarm checks, and perform preventive maintenance.
- Include the approved temperature range on the recording sheet.
- Ensure that corrective action is taken and documented when out-of-range temperatures or other problems are found.
- Train staff on how to perform and document corrective action.
- If the organization is not open 24/7:
  - Ensure that temperatures remain acceptable while the organization is closed.
  - If there is a need for after-hours notification of out-of-range temperatures, ensure that this notification takes place.
- Train staff on how to use a min/max thermometer and check competency.
- Monitor ambient temperature if the package insert includes a range for it. (Otherwise, ambient temperature does not need to be monitored.)
- If temperature documentation is computerized, ensure that documentation is retrievable by date and time and that the records are retained for the appropriate amount of time. (Tissue and blood storage must be retained for 10 years.)

For the full article, see the May 2017 issue of Environment of Care News. The article includes a sidebar on “Tips for Ensuring Complete and Accurate Documentation.”

**Performance measurement**

**Don’t miss this — Webinar replay out now on Pioneers in Quality™: Proven Practices Collection**

If you were unable to participate live in the 2017 Pioneers in Quality™: Creating your Proven Practices Submission webinar, fret not. A webinar replay and slide presentation is now available on The Joint Commission’s website.

That means there is still an opportunity to learn about:

- The purpose and value of the Proven Practices Collection
- Submission requirements for the Proven Practices Collection
- How to use the submission platform
- How to communicate information on the Proven Practices Collection to coworkers and leadership

The Pioneers in Quality™ program — which was launched last year to assist hospitals on their journey toward electronic clinical quality measure (eCQM) adoption — is accepting project submissions highlighting proven eCQM practices. Starting in September, select project submissions will be featured in webinars and presented to the field throughout 2017 as a part of the Pioneers in Quality™: Proven Practices Collection.
Build a safer environment: Participate in Safe + Sound Week
The Occupational Safety and Health Administration’s (OSHA) inaugural Safe + Sound Week is underway, running June 12-18. The week is a nationwide event designed to raise awareness and understanding of the value of safety and health programs that include:

- Management leadership
- Worker participation
- A systematic approach to finding and fixing hazards in workplaces

Participating in Safe + Sound Week can help health care organizations start or improve upon proactively identifying and managing workplace hazards prior to them causing injury or illness. Participating is easy. Start by visiting the OSHA Safe + Sound website. Follow the step-by-step process to:

- Select the activities you would like to do at your workplace
- Plan and promote your events
- Recognize your participation

While there, also check out additional resources such as:

- Webinar: Value of Safety and Health Programs
- Healthcare Safety Statistics (including resources from The Joint Commission)

The Joint Commission also has a web portal that provides resources for preventing workplace violence.

Learn more about Joint Commission Resources’ offerings online or call 877-223-6866.