Revisions Announced for Environment of Care and Life Safety Chapters

As announced in the June 2016 Perspectives, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) recently adopted the 2012 editions of the National Fire Protection Association’s NFPA 101: Life Safety Code® and NFPA 99: Health Care Facilities Code.† The August 2016 Perspectives announced that CMS and The Joint Commission will begin surveying to these standards on November 1, 2016.

To maintain alignment with CMS’s adoption of the 2012 codes, The Joint Commission recently revised several requirements in the “Environment of Care” (EC) and “Life Safety” (LS) chapters of the Comprehensive Accreditation Manuals for the ambulatory care, behavioral health care, critical access hospital, hospital, home care, and nursing care center programs. The revisions incorporate new and revised elements of performance (EPs) that correspond to the 2012 codes and allow for a more logical flow of the requirements for customer and surveyor use.

The Joint Commission posted draft versions of the new LS and EC standards to customers’ Joint Commission Connect™ extranet sites in August; the official prepublication versions will be posted by early November on The Joint Commission website at http://www.jointcommission.org/standards_information/prepublication_standards.aspx. The print accreditation manuals publishing in late fall 2016 will include the revised chapters, which will then be updated on E-dition* on January 9, 2017. Between November 1, 2016, and January 9, 2017, surveyors will use the current LS and EC standards to survey to the 2012 code requirements.

Looking to the Future

Future standards revisions planned for 2017 will include additional new and revised EPs in the LS and EC chapters. These EPs will encompass the survey procedures (K-Tags) that CMS has recently written to coincide with the 2012 Life Safety Code (NFPA 101) and Health Care Facilities Code (NFPA 99). Incorporating the CMS K-Tags into The Joint Commission’s accreditation requirements will result in surveys that more closely align with CMS expectations, thereby providing better survey outcomes for our customers.

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* Life Safety Code® is a registered trademark of the National Fire Protection Association, Quincy, MA.
† Chapters 7 (Information Technology), 8 (Plumbing), 12 (Emergency Management), and 13 (Security) were extracted from this adoption.