HealthcareSource Contingent Talent Management℠

Environment of Care

Core Competency Inservice

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Introduction

The Joint Commission has developed Environment of Care standards to help improve patient safety, decrease risks and improve quality of care. Joint Commission requires every healthcare organization to create and manage their own personal written Environment of Care Plan. Every healthcare employee needs to know how to access these plans in their work area. The written Environment of Care Plan is made up of eight programs which include:

- Safety Management
- Emergency Management
- Medical Equipment Management
- Hazardous Materials and Wastes Management
- Utilities Management
- Life Safety Management
- Security Management
- Management of the Social Environment

Safety Management

Healthcare facilities are required to develop a Safety Management plan to strive to provide a risk-free healthcare facility for employees, patients, and all who enter the facility. Healthcare facilities must have leaders in safety management who ensure set safety standards are followed, create concise and measurable safety goals, manage safety risks, monitor and evaluate safety programs, and provide safety training to all healthcare staff, patients, and family members. The leaders should consist of a governing safety committee, comprised of healthcare staff, and a safety leader or officer. These individuals enforce safety rules and regulations and have the authority to take action should there be a safety issue or risk. Safety leaders develop, manage, monitor and enforce safety protocols, but it is the responsibility of all healthcare employees to help maintain a safe environment for everyone.

Employee Responsibilities

- Report unsafe and unhealthy acts/conditions to the supervisor or Safety Officer.
- Correct unsafe or unhealthy acts/conditions.

- Complete mandatory safety training at least annually following new employee orientation.
- Help prevent and report all accidents and injuries.
- All emergency exits, and stairwells must be kept clean and clear.
- Be able to explain the proper use, maintenance, and storage of equipment and Personal Protective Equipment.
- Become familiar with and comply with all Safety and Health regulations, policies, and procedures

The Safety Committee

- The committee must be comprised of multidisciplinary healthcare employees at every level.
- They cover all aspects of Safety including, Occupational Health, Environmental Protection, Fire Protection, Patient Safety, Infection Control, and Radiation Safety drills.
- They review safety program effectiveness, accidents, illnesses, and incidents pertaining to safety.
- They plan and report on fire and disaster drills

Emergency Management

An Emergency Management Program is a comprehensive emergency plan that provides direction in the event of a community or internal disaster that disrupts the facility's ability to provide proper care for patients. This could also hinder their ability to provide emergency medical treatment for casualties resulting from the disaster.

Your Responsibility

- Be familiar with the Emergency Management Plan and know where to find copies.
- Understand your role in an emergency event.
- Perform your normal duties during an emergency until called upon to perform additional duties if needed.
- Know that most facilities in the area are linked to the Hospital Emergency Incident Command System (HEICS), which is a standard for healthcare emergency management.
- Remain calm.
- Know the difference between an internal and external disaster.
- Be prepared to be called upon to assist in the movement of patients, food, and supplies.

Internal versus External Disasters

Internal Emergencies occur within the facility. Examples include:

- Bomb threats
- Fires
- Shootings
- Chemical spills

External Emergencies occur within the community (outside the facility), which may require expansion of services for receiving patients. Examples include:

- Fires/explosions
- Aircraft/vehicle accidents
- Chemical spills
- Releases of toxic gases
- Natural disasters (tornadoes, floods, ice storms, earthquakes)
- Food and/or chemical poisonings
- Terrorism attacks
- Mass casualties

Medical Equipment Management

The Medical Equipment Management Program is designed to assess, monitor, and control the clinical and physical risks of equipment used for the diagnosis, treatment, monitoring, and care of patients.

What You Need to Know

- All equipment that is used for patient care must have routine preventative maintenance performed regularly.
- Employees need to know how to check and operate all equipment used on the unit including all emergency response equipment.
- Know the difference between life support and non-life support equipment.
- Understand how to report biomedical equipment failures.
- Preventive Maintenance (PM) inspection is regularly done every year.

- Properly report, document, and remove any broken equipment from service.
- Safety recalls, hazard alerts, and incident reviews are acted upon appropriately.
- Know that in the event of a utility failure red electrical outlets are supported by the Emergency Generators.
- Understand how to read the inspection sticker on all equipment to tell when the last day of use is before another inspection is required.
- Remember that all patient care equipment and all electrical non-patient equipment, regardless of ownership, should be inspected by Engineering Service prior to initial use. Personal equipment can be used only if patients have received written authorization.

Safe Medical Devices Act

In compliance with the Safe Medical Devices Act, healthcare facilities must report to the FDA and/or the manufacturer any device-related incident that has caused or contributed to the death, serious illness or injury of a patient/resident within the facility.

Hazardous Materials and Waste Management

This includes the Hazard Communication Program, the Hazardous Materials and Waste Management Program, as well as the safe obtaining, handling, and disposing of all chemicals Medical surveillance, as well as blood borne pathogen exposure (needle sticks and splashes) is also included in this program area.

What You Need to Know

- All employees have the right to know the hazards and identities of the chemicals they are exposed to in the workplace (the Hazzard Communication Program / “Right to Know Law”).
- Training must be provided to each employee for every chemical that is used on the unit.
- Know where to locate the chemical and hazardous material protocols.
- Use proper hand hygiene and personal protective equipment when handling hazardous chemicals or materials.
- Chemicals should be inventoried annually in each work area.
- Understand how to properly label, administer, handle, clean, store, and dispose any chemical or hazardous material used in the work place.
- Flammable chemicals must be stored in flammable storage cabinets. Corrosive chemicals must be stored in corrosive storage cabinets. Never store flammable and corrosive chemicals in the same storage cabinet.
- Know how to clean up hazardous chemical spills and where to locate the spill cleanup kits on the unit.

- Understand how to wash off any hazardous chemicals on the skin.
- Know where the eye wash station is and how to use it to wash out any chemical, or bodily fluid, which splashed into the eyes.
- Remove any clothing, or personal protective equipment, that has hazardous chemicals on it.
- Know the units needle stick protocol and how to report a needle stick.
- Understand how to report exposure of hazardous chemicals or materials.

Safety Data Sheets

All chemicals are required to have a Safety Data Sheet SDSs (formally known as the Material Safety Data Sheet MSDS) that provides information about the chemical. Employers must ensure that all SDSs are readily accessible to every employee for all hazardous chemicals in the workplace.

The following information is included on an SDS:

- Section 1, Chemical identification
- Section 2, Chemical Hazard identification and label requirements
- Section 3, Composition of chemical ingredients
- Section 4, First-aid measures including side effects and symptoms.
- Section 5, Fire-fighting and extinguishing measures.
- Section 6, Accidental release measures including; proper methods of containment and cleanup.
- Section 7, Handling and storage precautions.
- Section 8, Exposure controls including OSHA's Permissible Exposure Limits (PELs); Threshold Limit Values (TLVs); and personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Section 9, Physical and chemical properties of the chemical.
- Section 10, Stability and reactivity lists including hazardous reactions.
- Section 11, Toxicological information including acute and chronic effects.
- Section 12, Ecological information
- Section 13, Disposal considerations
- Section 14, Transport information
- Section 15, Regulatory information

- Section 16, Other information, includes the date of preparation or last revision.

Utility Management

The Utility Management Program involves the operational response to failures of all utility systems that support the patient care environment. It also involves the periodic inspection of utility-related equipment and systems for preventive maintenance.

What You Need to Know

- Know where outlets, zones, pressure alarms, and shut-off valves are located in your area.
- Be able to locate all the red electrical outlets.
- Ensure all life sustaining equipment is plugged into a red back-up generator outlet.
- Understand who is authorized to use the Oxygen Shut-Off Valve.
- Know where the compressed gas cylinders for oxygen administration are located.
- Know the units' policy for an inactive elevator system.

The Utility Management Program includes:

- Electrical Distribution and Emergency Power
- Plumbing System
- Medical Gas System
- Medical/Surgical Vacuum System
- Boiler and Steam System
- Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning System (HVAC)
- Communication System
- Vertical Transport Systems (Elevators)
- Electrical Distribution and Emergency Power

All utility systems require a primary electrical power source as well as a back-up source, such as an emergency generator. When the primary source fails, the back-up source will come on within ten seconds.

The following hospital equipment is on the emergency generators:

- All alarm systems
- Computer mainframe and network hubs
- Emergency lighting system
- Medical Air and Vacuum Systems
- An Emergency Water Distribution System (pumps)
- Pager and communication systems
- Designated red outlets for Patient Life Support
- Elevators
- Nurse Call Systems
- Code Blue Systems
- Medical Gas Systems (oxygen, nitrogen, medical air, etc.)

Life Safety Management

The Life Safety Management Program provides instructions on how to react during a fire emergency in order to keep employees and patients safe.

What You Need to Know

- Be alert, using all of your senses (smell, sounds, sight, etc.).
- Take time to investigate suspicious smells or smoke immediately.
- Close all doors.
- If you smell smoke behind a door, feel the door with the back of your hand first.
- If the door is too hot to touch, do not open it.
- Call the emergency number for the facility.
- Remember the acronym RACE (rescue, alarm, confine and extinguish).
- Fire doors are located throughout the facility and must not be blocked.
- Know where your two nearest fire exits are.

- Smoke detectors are typically installed 30 feet apart in all corridors and are inspected annually.
- Know where the Fire Alarm Pull Stations are located, and where the two nearest to your work area are.
- Know the location of the smoke barriers and fire walls closest to your work area.
- Know where the two nearest fire extinguishers are and how to properly operate them.

Interim Life Safety Measures

Interim Life Safe Measures (ILSM) are a series of 12 Administrative Actions required to temporarily compensate for any inactive life safety feature of the building. This would be important anytime the existing life safety features are being compromised in or around immediate work areas during times of construction or remodeling. ILSM are intended to provide and maintain a level of safety for all who enter the facility. Life safety is not to be compromised for any occupants of the building. This includes: construction workers, patients, employees, volunteers, and visitors. Cleanliness of patient care areas and public corridors must be maintained.

Security Management

Security Management is comprised of security staff, and possibly the police or public safety, to ensure the safety of all who enter the facility.

What You Need to Know

- You should know who is responsible for security, including who secures the opening and closing of doors, parking lot areas, and internal and external security checks.
- Know who monitors vehicular access.
- Know who maintains security in sensitive areas such as the pharmacy.
- Know who is responsible for responding to violence in the facility.
- Know who responds to bomb threats or gun threats.
- Know the Emergency Reporting Phone Number for the facility you are working in, and the police notification procedure.
- Understand your role in bomb threats.
- Understand how to handle telephone threats calmly and quietly, and keep the caller talking as long as possible.
- In case of written threats, preserve the written material and the container it arrived in.

- Know when and how to call the emergency phone number and/or telephone operator.
- Understand the procedure to follow for a missing patient search.
- Know infant abduction policy and procedure
- Notify security or a supervisor as soon as possible when you become aware of actual or suspected suspicious behavior.
- All employees are required to have annual training in workplace violence policies and procedures, as well as how to handle and prevent workplace violence.

Management of the Social Environment

The Social Environment Program is essential to excellence. The delivery of quality healthcare is enhanced by appropriate physical surroundings and features that contribute to the psychosocial well-being of patient. Special emphasis is placed on the strategic planning of services, programs, and architectural features that support patient needs.

This program is tailored to the physical, psychological, and social needs of the patient. This is done through:

- Providing adequate supplies for patient grooming (personal hygiene).
- Having adequate drawer and closet space.
- Providing suitable clothing.
- Providing telephones (with privacy).
- Doors on sleeping rooms.
- The number of patients per room.
- Space provided according to appropriate age, developmental level, and clinical status.
- Maintaining a smoke free environment.
- Providing a designated smoking area.

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