



Are you survey-ready?

If your hospital has ever had the pleasure of participating in an unannounced compliance survey, you know that it can serve as a great wake-up call to all staff members. Being survey-ready at all times should be every employee's daily priority.

SMS Healthcare has created the following checklist to help keep everyone on your team survey-ready and your hospital citation-free. At a minimum, all Environmental Services departments should be prepared for the following inspection points:



Is your paperwork detailed and up-to-date?

Within healthcare, there is a lot of paperwork and EVS is not excluded from that expectation. Surveyors love effective systems and will look extensively for trends. Great organization will allow you to be viewed as professional and ease scrutiny.

- Establish standardized employee records, equipment logs, cleaning logs, and training records.
- Maintain records annually for all employees, especially management.
- Initial and date all records for proof of timely occurrences.



Are all your chemicals being labeled, stored and used correctly?

Allowing for open access to blank chemical bottles is a one of the top survey citations in the healthcare industry. Along with labeling, proper chemical use and storage should also be in compliance with survey standards to ensure staff, patient and visitor safety at all times.

LABELS

- Ensure that all chemical bottles are labeled, or have the product description already printed on the bottle.
- Standardize chemicals on each cart, only making labeled bottles available.
- Consistently perform internal checks to ensure compliance.

STORAGE

- Separate chemical closets from your paper supply storage. Never store paper products within your chemical closets, as it is an infection prevention issue.
- Make sure your chemical closets are organized, locked and clean, with only supplies available on shelves 6" off the floor and 18" from the ceiling.

USE

- Never allow mixing of multiple chemicals. This is dangerous and can also lessen the effectiveness of disinfectants.
- Utilize the right chemicals for the correct purpose.
- Pay attention to the specific dwell times required for each chemical to work effectively. Many chemicals have different dwell times and surveyors often ask your EVS staff for the dwell times specific to a chemical on their cart. If your chemicals are all properly labeled, the dwell time should be listed on the bottle or container label.



Are you properly storing, maintaining and keeping track of your equipment?

Whether your hospital utilizes stainless steel or plastic carts, the designation of temporary cart storage is essential in preventing survey citations. Another top citation comes from unlocked carts being left in public areas, where anyone could take and unsafely use a chemical. Proper storage, maintenance and tracking of your equipment will eliminate any future citations.

STORAGE

- All custodial carts should have the ability to lock away chemicals and supplies. Whenever a housekeeper is away from their cart, the carts should be locked and stored in a designated safe area.
- Carts should never block hallway access or fire doors.

MAINTENANCE

- Inspect equipment on a regular basis and track any repairs made. This will guarantee your workers' safety and cut down on costs.

TRACKING

- Create a managed sign in and out process for staff to track their equipment in the following areas:
 - Clean equipment after use.
 - Empty unused liquids and chemicals.
 - Check equipment batteries.
 - Inspect cords and plugs.



Are you fully trained for your specific location?

It is common for a surveyor to find a fire extinguisher, locate the nearest hospital employee and ask that employee where the nearest fire extinguisher is in the event of an emergency. The expectation is that the employee will bring them to that specific fire extinguisher. In the event of a hospital code, every employee must also be trained on how to properly react and where to go in case there is a fire.

- Check that your staff is well versed in the location of the nearest fire exits and fire extinguishers in each location where they work.
- Record your drill participation and location-specific training in your employee folders.
- Review this training often to stay ahead of the game.



Do you know where to find the correct answer to a question, if you don't know it?

It is extremely important that all employees understand they may not have the answer to every question a surveyor asks — and that's okay! A surveyor is just as interested in an employee knowing how to find an answer to a question they do not know, rather than trying to make an answer up on the spot. Surveyors want to see that staff will appropriately seek out information in a quick, efficient manner.

- Ensure employees know where to find their answers on the intranet and SDS sheets, as well as, in their employee manuals and emergency code books.
- Train employees to understand that getting the right answer is more important than giving an instant answer. This is crucial not only for survey purposes, but also for creating a safe hospital environment.

Ready to break it down further?

If you have any questions or would like a more detailed breakdown of our proven processes in helping hospitals maintain a daily safety-ready atmosphere, visit our website at www.smshealthcare.com or contact Denny Lyons at:



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