The Joint Commission

Proposed IC Chapter Requirements for the Ambulatory Health Care Accreditation Program

IC.04.01.01

Standard text: The organization maintains and documents an infection prevention and control program for the prevention and control of infections and communicable diseases.

Elements of Performance (EPs) for IC.04.01.01

EP 1 The organization assigns an infection control professional(s) who is qualified through training in infection control to be responsible for the ongoing infection prevention and control program.
Note: If the organization is part of a system that has a unified infection prevention and control program, the designated infection control professional at the system level may be responsible for the organization's program. The unified infection prevention and control program takes into account the unique circumstances and any significant differences in patient populations and services offered at each organization.
(See also HR.01.01.01, EP 1)

EP 2 The designated infection control professional is responsible for the following:
- Maintenance of a sanitary environment
- Development and implementation of infection control activities
- Monitoring compliance with all policies, procedures, protocols, and other infection prevention and control program requirements
- Overseeing the development of action plans to address infection control issues and revisions of the action plans, when indicated
- Compliance with reportable disease requirements of the local health authority

EP 3 The organization's infection prevention and control program has written policies and procedures to guide its activities and methods for preventing and controlling the transmission of infections and communicable diseases. The policies and procedures are in accordance with applicable law and regulation, nationally recognized evidence-based guidelines, and standards of practice, including the use of standard precautions.
Note 1: Relevant federal, state, and local law and regulations include but are not limited to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations for reprocessing single-use medical devices; Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) Bloodborne Pathogens Standard 29 CFR 1910.1030, Personal Protective Equipment Standard 29 CFR 1910.132, and Respiratory Protection Standard 29 CFR 1910.134; health care worker vaccination laws; state and local public health authorities' requirements for reporting of communicable diseases and outbreaks; and state and local regulatory requirements for biohazardous or regulated medical waste generators.
Note 2: Standard precautions include hand hygiene, environmental cleaning and disinfection, injection and medication safety, use of personal protective equipment (PPE), minimizing potential exposures, and reprocessing of reusable medical equipment or devices. For full details on standard precautions, refer to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Core Infection Prevention and Control Practices for Safe Healthcare Delivery in All Settings https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/guidelines/core-practices/index.html.

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EP 4 For organizations that perform high-level disinfection and sterilization procedures onsite: The organization’s policies and procedures for cleaning, disinfection, and sterilization of reusable medical and surgical devices and equipment address the following:
- Cleaning, disinfection, and sterilization of reusable medical and surgical devices in accordance with the Spaulding classification system and manufacturers' instructions
Note: The Spaulding classification system classifies medical and surgical devices as critical, semicritical, or noncritical based on risk to the patient from contamination on a device and establishes the levels of germicidal activity (sterilization, high-level disinfection, intermediate disinfection, and low-level disinfection) to be used for the three classes of devices.
- Use of FDA–approved liquid chemical sterilants for the processing of critical devices and high-level disinfectants for the processing of semicritical devices in accordance with the FDA–cleared label and device manufacturers' instructions
- Required documentation for device reprocessing cycles, including but not limited to sterilizer cycle logs, the frequency of chemical and biological testing, and the results of testing for appropriate concentration for chemicals used in high-level disinfection
- Resolution of conflicts or discrepancies between a medical device manufacturer’s instructions and manufacturers' instructions for automated high-level disinfection or sterilization equipment
- Criteria and the process for the use of immediate-use steam sterilization
- Actions to take in the event of a reprocessing error or failure identified either prior to the release of the reprocessed item(s) or after the reprocessed item(s) was used or stored for later use
Note: Depending on the nature of the incident, examples of actions may include quarantine of the sterilizer, recall of item(s), stakeholder notification, patient notification, surveillance, and follow-up.

EP 7 The infection prevention and control program is an integral part of the organization’s quality assessment and performance improvement program.
Note: If the organization is part of a system that has a unified quality assessment and performance improvement program, there is a process in place to ensure that issues localized to the organization are considered and addressed.

EP 8 The organization provides job-specific infection control education and training to staff.

EP 9 The organization provides information resources and supplies to support infection prevention and control activities.
Note: Examples of information resources include local, state, and federal public health authorities’ advisories and alerts, such as the CDC’s Health Alert Network (HAN); FDA alerts; manufacturers' instructions for use; and guidelines used to inform policies. Example of supplies include alcohol-based hand sanitizers, hand soap, personal protective equipment, and cleaning and disinfection supplies.

IC.06.01.01

Standard text: The organization implements activities for the prevention and control of infections and communicable diseases.

Elements of Performance (EPs) for IC.06.01.01

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EP 1 To prioritize the infection prevention and control program's activities and determine what resources are necessary for the program, the organization identifies risks for infection, contamination, and exposure that pose a risk to patients and staff based on the following:
- Its geographic location, community, and population served
- Care, treatment, and services it provides
- Analysis of surveillance activities and other infection control data
- Relevant infection control issues identified by the local, state, or federal public health authorities that could impact the organization

Note: Risks may include organisms with a propensity for transmission within health care facilities based on published reports and the occurrence of clusters of patients (for example, norovirus, respiratory syncytial virus [RSV], influenza, measles), and bloodborne pathogens (for example, hepatitis B virus, hepatitis C virus, and human immunodeficiency virus [HIV]).

EP 2 The organization reviews identified risks at least annually or whenever significant changes in risk occur.

EP 3 The organization implements activities for the surveillance, prevention, and control of infections and communicable diseases, including maintaining a functional and sanitary environment. (See also NPSG.07.01.01, EP 1)

EP 5 The organization implements policies and procedures to minimize the risk of communicable disease exposure and acquisition among its staff, in accordance with law and regulation. The policies and procedures address the following:
- Screening and medical evaluations for infectious diseases
- Immunizations
- Staff education and training
- Management of staff with potentially infectious exposures or communicable illnesses

Note: Occupational health functions may be performed by an outside facility or provider, at the health system or network level, or through contractual agreements.

EP 6 The organization develops and implements necessary action plans to address infection control issues and improve its infection prevention and control program.
Note: The organization evaluates and revises its plan as needed.

EP 8 Staff handle, store, process, and transport linens in accordance with local or state regulations.

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