THE ADVISOR
MONTHLY COMPLIANCE COMMUNICATOR

SAFETY – BACK TO BASICS!

Infection prevention and control is not simply a list of tasks, provision of appropriate equipment, and policies and procedures. There are many important elements of a strong infection control program which is the foundation of a culture of safety for every healthcare environment. From leadership to volunteers, everyone must be committed to improved patient outcomes and a safe environment for employees.

Basic Principle #1 –Administrative Controls

- Policies and procedures must be developed supporting the types of services delivered in each practice. Having formal policies and procedures will set the standard of care in the offices and serve as an educational tool for all existing and new employees. Areas that may need attention include: hand hygiene, employee immunizations, use of personal protective equipment (PPE), surface disinfection, sterilization, and management of exposure incidents.

- Practices should be aware of the immune status of all clinical employees as recommended by the CDC. While the only vaccine required by law to be offered to employees at risk of exposure to blood and/or body fluids is the hepatitis B vaccination, it is prudent to establish immune status for employees involved in clinical care for illnesses such as chicken pox, measles, which although rare has occurred in recent years, and pertussis. As always it is recommended that all employees receive an annual influenza vaccine. The CDC recommendations on vaccinations for healthcare workers can be reviewed at http://www.immunize.org/catg.d/p2017.pdf.

- Supplies must be available. Be sure to include hand-hygiene products, PPE, surface disinfection products, safety needles/devices, and sterilization supplies (wraps, pouches, chemical indicators, and spore tests).

- Each practice should assign an individual to monitor compliance with safety standards. The ideal candidate should have training in both required and recommended safety standards and work consistently in the practice location.

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INFECTION CONTROL

SAFETY – BACK TO BASICS!

Basic Principle #2 – Education and Training

• All staff members should be reminded frequently of the importance of safety procedures. This can be handled through monthly staff meetings, informational posters placed in prominent areas as reminders, and on an annual basis with other compliance training. TMC newsletters are a great source of safety information. The last page of each newsletter provides a means to document employee review of the information which may be included in training files.

• Task specific training for regular employees as well as contract labor should occur as outlined in written policies and as required by law. Areas of focus should include: appropriate use of PPE, the correct process for surface cleaning and disinfection, cleaning and packaging instrumentation for sterilization and monitoring the sterilization process.

Basic Principle #3 – Appropriate use of PPE

• PPE must be accessible based on the exposure risk associated with the task being performed. Face protection, gowns, either disposable or reusable, which provide protection of the arms, and the use of gloves is indicated for ALL procedures where there is the potential for splash or splatter to occur. Masks should always cover the nose and be discarded between each patient and when visibly soiled. Remember the goal is to protect the mucous membranes of the eyes/nose/mouth from exposure to potential pathogens. Be certain to remind employees of the need to wear heavy duty utility gloves when handling contaminated sharps during the cleaning and decontamination process.

• Employee education on the appropriate use is not only important from a safety standpoint, it is required in the Bloodborne Pathogen standard on an annual basis (1910.1030(2)(vii)F).

Basic Principle #4 – Injection Safety

• Designate an area for medication preparation and always utilize aseptic technique when preparing and administering medications. Diaphragms of medication vials/IV access ports must be cleansed prior to access with a sterile alcohol pad prior to access.

• When using multi-dose vials, ensure a sterile needle/syringe is utilized each time the vial is accessed.

• Never administer medication from a single syringe to multiple patients.

• Fluid infusion and administration sets should be utilized for one patient only.

Basic Principle #5 – Appropriate use of Single Use Devices

• Any item which is received from the manufacturer and labeled as a single use device must be used for one patient/one procedure and then discarded. Gloves should be discarded after use, never turned in-side out and worn again, or washed and reused.

There are a few questions you might want to consider when evaluating your safety program.

• How do you track and follow-up on infections which may occur in the practice?

• Are you performing spore testing weekly?

• Do you perform equipment maintenance as recommended by the manufacturer?

• Do you monitor compliance with hand hygiene recommendations?

• Do you perform a medical screening each time you see patients in your practice to identify any changes which may impact the patient's ability to fight infection?

Ensuring the safety of workers and patients must be a top priority for every practice. The resources outlined here will help you create a safe environment for employees and patients if you will go back to basics!

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CLUTTER CAN COST YOU!

Every office seems to have those back closets, attics or hidden storage rooms that they'd rather no one see. This is often where old computer equipment, broken desk chairs and dusty boxes of long gone patients often find their resting place. Disorganized drawers, crammed cabinets and overflowing working areas can be the result of too much stuff and too little space. Almost every office can relate. But did you know that clutter can be an obstacle for cleanliness and overall safety?

Controlling your office clutter is the law. OSHA section 1910.22(a)(1) states that "All places of employment, passageways, storerooms, and service rooms shall be kept clean and orderly and in a sanitary condition."

Clutter is one of the first things an OSHA compliance officer notices when they walk in your door. Desk tops, exam room counters, laboratory tables along with drawers, cabinets and cupbards provide an OSHA inspector a first impression of your office that could reflect on how you might be treated. Clutter can cost you!

Clutter can adversely impact safety and health in your workplace.

- **CLUTTER CAN MAKE YOU SICK.** Cluttered work areas make it difficult to effectively clean and disinfect surfaces and objects, presenting a breeding ground for germs and bacteria. Clutter exacerbates allergies from build up of dust mites, mold and other allergens. Floors lined with clutter are rarely thoroughly vacuumed. Remove unnecessary items from your workspace, keeping only the essentials easily accessible. Use disinfecting wipes on surfaces and objects often during the work day and keep counter tops and desks free of clutter. A recent study showed that the average desktop has 400 times more bacteria than a toilet seat.

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3

CLUTTER CAN COST YOU!

Continued from page 3

- **CLUTTER IS UNSAFE.** Slips, trips and falls account for the majority of on-the-job reported injuries and 15% of all work-related deaths. Cluttered hallways, escape routes, stairways and storage areas can contribute to slips, trips and falls and even death. Clutter can block safety equipment such as fire extinguishes, emergency alarms, electrical breaker panels and exit paths. Tie up excess cords, wires and avoid placing small electrical appliances directly on the floor as they can be considered a trip hazard. Keep your office space clean and well organized to avoid unsafe conditions.

- **CLUTTER IS DANGEROUS.** Clutter is often stashed in attics, around hot water heaters, compressed gases, janitor closets, electrical rooms and under desks. These cluttered areas can become extremely dangerous when accompanied by heat, chemical funes, gas under pressure, and overloaded electrical wires, strips and surge protectors. These areas should be kept completely clear of clutter

There is a strong correlation between a clean, orderly workplace and a safe successful organization. Avoid the risks of accidents, illnesses and citations by creating a daily cleanup policy and program that sets out duties that include the following:

- Keep floors, stairways, aisles and other passageways clear of boxes, equipment, trash and other clutter.
- Put instruments, tools and equipment away when not in use.
- Stack materials carefully on shelves or in cabinets, placing the heavier items on the bottom.
- Clean up spills immediately.
- Report broken equipment.
- Propery dispose of trash.
- Keep food and beverages away from the work area.
- Keep paper and other combustibles away from heat sources and electrical equipment.
- Prevent dirt, grease and dust build-up on machinery and equipment.
- Keep containers of flammables closed when not in use.
- Don't place tools or equipment on the edges of shelves or tables.
- Properly store or throw away unneeded, broken, outdated items away.
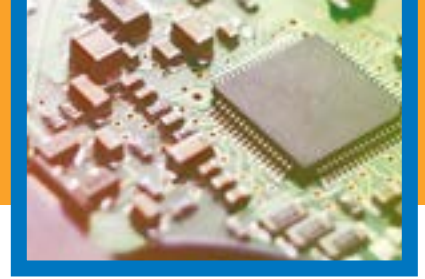- Maintain a consistent cleaning schedule that helps to eleviate clutter from your office.

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TMC HIPAA COMPLIANCE

MICROSOFT ENDS SUPPORT OF WINDOWS 7 PRO AND SERVER 2008 R2 STANDARD

Microsoft has recently announced that they are discontinuing support for Windows 7 Pro Operating System and Server 2008 R2 Standard Operating System, effective January 14, 2020.

End of support means you should take action now! After January 14, 2020, there will be no new security updates, non-security hotfixes, free or paid assisted support options or online technical content updates.

Continuing to run Windows 7 Pro and Server 2008 after the end of the support date may expose your office to potential risks, such as:

Security and compliance risks: Unsupported and unpatched environments are vulnerable to security risks. There is a high probability that viruses, malware, and hackers will find vulnerabilities in the Windows 7 and Server 2008 operating systems. Once these vulnerabilities are exposed, there will be no way to fix them. At that point, viruses and hackers will be able to exploit vulnerabilities in Windows 7 and Server 2008 environments at will.

Lack of independent software vendor support: Many independent software vendors are unlikely to support new versions of software applications running on Windows 7 and Server 2008.

Take action today to ensure you remain on supported versions of Server and Windows operating systems! You should begin planning immediately to ensure you migrate before the end support date of **January 14, 2020.** Contact your IT Service Provider to understand the best options to meet your practice needs.

This article was written by Stephanie Daniels of IT Practice, Inc.
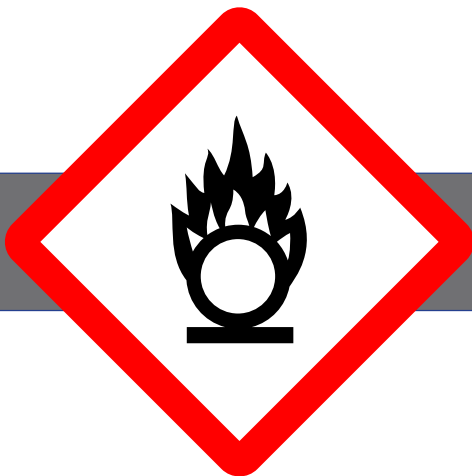
What does this pictogram stand for?

Is everyone in your practice current on the United Nations Globally Harmonized System of pictograms that communicate hazardous chemicals? Each month we will print a GHS pictogram. If you can identify it correctly, you will be entered in a drawing to win a cash gift card. At the end of the year we will have one big drawing for the grand prize! Don't wait! Click here to enter by August 30th for your chance to win!

Last month our pictogram was "not a pictogram". Many got it right but we had to pick only one winner and it was Holly S. of North Carolina. Congratulations Holly!

CLICK HERE TO ENTER

IT'S YOUR CALL

OSHA Situation:

The transport container is contaminated with blood and other potentially infectious material (OPIM) from our instruments. How should we clean these reusable, transport containers?

HIPAA Situation:

What are the top reasons for data breaches?

CLICK HERE FOR THE ANSWERS

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INSTRUCTIONS

Print and post newsletter in office for staff review. Each member should sign this form when completed. Keep on file as proof of training on these topics.

IN THIS ISSUE