TMC
TOTAL MEDICAL COMPLIANCE

THE ADVISOR
MONTHLY COMPLIANCE COMMUNICATOR

STOP! AND THINK SAFETY

As we head into a new year and a new decade, let's keep the focus on safety for both workers and patients! OSHA seeks to improve the safety of workers, while other entities, such as the CDC, focus on the safe care of patients. Each practice should have standards and practices in place which provide protections for both. Would you consider your practice safe for workers and patients?

EMPLOYEE SAFETY
Employees are the MOST important asset of any healthcare.

TRAINING

New hire employees should receive a thorough orientation to your practice. At a minimum, training must be provided for new workers at risk of exposure to blood or body fluids, and bloodborne pathogens (BBP). Any employee dealing with any type of hazardous material must receive training on the chemicals and how they should be handled including precautions needed to ensure safe handling. *Annual* bloodborne pathogen training is also required for at-risk employees; however, many practices also use this time to remind all employees of other safety issues and to review the basics of infection control. Training creates a culture of safety for everyone.

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EMPLOYEE SAFETY

Safety training should include the following:

- The location of the Exposure Control Plan, sometimes referred to as the OSHA book. This may be in hardcopy or electronic format and will include directions on how to report and response to an exposure to blood or other body fluids.
- The location of the Safety Data Sheets (SDS) for any hazardous chemicals or substances in use in the practice.
- The exit route in the event of a fire or other event requiring everyone to evacuate.
- The location of the user manual for all equipment in operation.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PPE is utilized to protect workers against exposure to blood or body fluids and hazardous chemicals. Take a minute to walk through your practice to observe if PPE is being utilized appropriately. If procedures are being performed that generate splash or splatter, is the employees' face protected as well as their hands and arms? Are employees using utility gloves when handling sharp instruments during the decontamination process?

PPE is not just nice to have. It is also required by the Bloodborne Pathogen Standard:

SAFETY FIRST

1910.1030(d)(2) - Excerpts

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)--
When there is occupational exposure, **the employer shall provide, at no cost to the employee, appropriate personal protective equipment** such as, but not limited to, gloves, gowns, laboratory coats, face shields or masks and eye protection, and mouthpieces, resuscitation bags, pocket masks, or other ventilation devices.

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OSHA COMPLIANCE

Patients come to you expecting safe, quality care. Unfortunately, there have been reports of patient safety issues which have placed thousands of patients at risk of exposure to hepatitis B, hepatitis C, and/or HIV. A review of basic infection control principles will position your practice to provide exceptional care.

Room Decontamination

Thorough cleaning and decontamination of clinical contact surfaces is required after any procedure involving splash/splatter. During this time of the year, it is also important to disinfect clinical surfaces when caring for patients with respiratory illness. To ensure that microorganisms are appropriately eliminated, be certain to leave the chemical on the surface for the appointed contact time.

Injection Safety

Use aseptic technique when preparing and administering medications and ALWAYS ensure a sterile needle/syringe are used each time a medication vial is accessed. Never administer medication from a single syringe to multiple patients.

Instrument Sterilization

Instruments used for procedures should be cleaned and sterilized. The following are a few important recommendations by the CDC:

- Each load must be monitored for certain physical elements including, time, temperature and the presence of steam.
- Each package must include an internal chemical monitor. If the chemical monitor cannot be seen through the package, an external monitor should also be utilized.
- Provide spore testing on a weekly basis to ensure proper functioning of the sterilization unit

Appropriately Utilize 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. It is not appropriate to sterilize them, place these items in a high-level disinfectant, or surface disinfect for reuse. Examples include suture removal kits, single use impression trays, sterile saline/water for irrigation, and syringes utilized for irrigation.

A culture of safety includes both employees and patients. It is not a book on a shelf with list of tasks to complete, but a mindset that ensures the people who enter this practice will leave safe and glad they came! Whether worker or patient, that is a win-win!

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HIPAA COMPLIANCE

Cybersecurity Hygiene – Start 2020 with a Clean Slate

Hand hygiene and "Cover Your Cough" best practices are well known in the healthcare industry, but do you know there is a thing called "Cybersecurity Hygiene?" Since it's the beginning of a new year, here are 5 things you can do to improve your hygiene and defense against viruses, including ransomware.

Change your passwords.

The longer you use the same password, the easier it may be for someone to figure out what it is and gain unauthorized access to your systems.

If your software does not already send you automatic updates to change your password, most systems have an "Account" section where you can update your password. Remember to use a long password, like a passphrase, that is not easy for anyone else to guess, and do not write it down where someone else can access it.

Test your data backup.

The barrage of ransomware attacks in 2019 has shown how important it is to ensure your data is backed up and free from corrupt files. Recovering from a ransomware or a disaster requires an error-free backup file.

Talk to your IT department or vendor about how to test your practice's backup, how often your data is backed up, and how long it would take to restore in the event of ransomware or a disaster.

Review your office and IT emergency contacts.

It's easy to overlook updates to a contact list when someone changes a role or moves on to another job.

Take a few moments to ensure that the emergency contacts for your office staff and your IT department or vendor are current. Contact IT and other critical individuals to confirm their contact information.

Review current user accounts and their access levels to software, mobile devices, and certain office areas.

Don't forget to disable an employee's access when they change roles or leave because unauthorized access and inappropriate access can cause privacy and security vulnerabilities.

Most software systems allow an administrator to review a report of current users and access levels. If you are unsure, contact your IT department or vendor, or your software provider. A review of access is also required by the HIPAA Security Rule.

Plan ahead. Schedule your annual training and risk assessments now so you do not forget later in the year.

Regular training and security reminders are required by HIPAA. The HIPAA Security Rule also requires a regular risk assessment to be performed on your systems and processes.

Keeping security top of mind for employees is the best defense against a serious incident or breach. Awareness helps regular employee behavior and early detection of issues. A regular risk assessment also helps identify any other areas for improvement that might not be obvious in your daily routines.

To borrow from the healthcare field again, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure! If you're unsure how to implement any of these or other compliance-related items, please contact TMC or your IT support.

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ONLINE TRAINING

TMC'S NEW ONLINE TRAINING COURSES

Last month we introduced to you our new and improved online training platform with a friendlier interface, additional courses, better technical assistance, and more. This month, we want to highlight our new and exciting course offerings!

We have expanded our course catalog to help your practice meet the demands of compliance in a world of fast-changing technology and challenging new threats. In addition to the HIPAA and OSHA compliance and Infection Control training you trust, we now offer courses on a variety of new topics such as: Human Resources (HR), Workplace Safety (Active Shooter), Cyber Security, Disaster Recovery, Contingency Planning, and Ethics. As the world changes around us, TMC wants to be your partner in health and well-being and we will continue to add courses on varied topics such as stress management and others.

Please check out our library of courses. If you have questions, or you don't see what you need, contact us at info@totalmedicalcompliance.com.

Online Training Courses

CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE

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COMPLIMENTARY WEBINAR

NOTICE TO DENTAL PRACTICES

The Dental Effluent Guidelines final compliance date is July 2020 and will require some dental practices to implement an amalgam separator and other mercury reduction practices. Join Karen Gregory as she breaks down the rule and walks through the required one-time compliance report.

The webinar
Amalgam Separator Compliance Deadline: Are You Prepared?
is scheduled for February 27, 2020.

Register NOW to avoid addressing these requirements at the last minute.

REGISTER NOW FOR THIS
COMPLIMENTARY WEBINAR

CLICK HERE

IT'S YOUR CALL

OSHA:
What kind of fire extinguishers do most offices have?

CLASS	COMBUSTIBLE TYPE
A	Ordinary combustibles such as paper and wood.
B	Flammable liquids and gas
C	Electrical
D	Combustible metals like magnesium
K	Cooking oils and grease

HIPAA:
Our office has upgraded our computer systems since Microsoft support will be ending for Windows 7 and Windows Server 2008. Are we missing any steps?

CLICK FOR ANSWERS

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GETTING TO KNOW TMC EMPLOYEES

This month we want to introduce you to our new Controller here at TMC, Jim Gray. Jim brings over 30 years of accounting and financial management to TMC. He is a graduate of Towson University in Towson, MD and has been involved in many industries throughout his career. He specializes in financial and business growth of these companies. He recently relocated back to Charlotte and has joined our TMC family.

1. What is your must-have or go-to morning beverage?
   Diet Pepsi
2. What is the most fun or unusual item you keep on your desk?
   Seashells from every beach we have visited.
3. What is the strangest or most fun job you've ever had?
   Being the target on a golf driving range for the members. The pay was $2.00 per bag.
4. How far away from home is the farthest away you've ever been?
   Italy
5. What is your go-to item that you most often bring to potlucks?
   Chicken Salad with a twist.
6. Where is your favorite place to listen to music?
   Beach.
7. What is the last movie you saw in a movie theatre?
   Patton
8. Do you have any phobias?
   Snakes! I hate snakes!

9. What is the most daring thing you've ever done?
   Kissed the Blarney Stone.
10. Do you collect anything?
    Baseball cards from 1909.
11. Do you (or would you) sing at Karaoke night?
    The 8th grade Trubadours was the height of my singing career. I retired the last day of school and only sing now at church on Christmas Eve.
12. Are you related (even distantly) to anyone famous?
    The founder of Sedutto's Ice Cream. Everyone should have a relative with an ice cream factory.
13. What is your favorite holiday?
    Golf, followed by Golf.
14. What was the last non-work-related thing you read?
    Diary of an Enlisted Man.
15. Is your glass half-empty or half-full?
    Depends who's buying.

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MONTHLY COMPLIANCE COMMUNICATOR

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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