

Lessons from the Field:

Proactive Strategies for Joint Commission Physical Environment Compliance

Speakers



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Agenda

- ▶ BWH Background
- ▶ Proactive Strategies
 - ▶ Mock Surveys
 - ▶ Document Review
 - ▶ Training
- ▶ Communication Strategies
- ▶ Lessons Learned

Brigham & Women's Hospital

- ▶ BWH Medical Preeminence Dates Back to 1832
- ▶ #1 Nation Obstetrics and Gynecology
- ▶ 20,000 inpatient stays
- ▶ 2.2 million outpatient visits
- ▶ 20,000 employees and 5,000 scientists
- ▶ 75 FTE - Building Trades
- ▶ 15 FTE - Management
- ▶ Last JC survey: February 2025
 - ▶ 5 LS surveyor days



BWH Preparedness and Competing Priorities

- ▶ Building expansions over the years stretched preventative maintenance resources beyond capacity
- ▶ Facility Condition Assessment Report completed in 2019. Many areas aged from severe condition to critical
- ▶ 10 days into starting at BWH we witnessed 92 water intrusion events related to the deep freeze event January 2023
- ▶ Project scopes did not always align with deferred maintenance plan
- ▶ Impact of construction practices on regulatory readiness
 - ▶ Storage in mechanical spaces
 - ▶ Renovation of pods in Tower - fire alarm changes

Annual Mock Survey Importance

1. Fresh set of eyes to review Physical Environment, documents
2. Catch project - or repair - related compliance issues early
 - ▶ Align remediation costs to the responsible party
 - ▶ Understanding true compliance standing
3. Identify priorities among competing needs
 - ▶ IS projects, real estate initiatives, research, department relocations
 - ▶ Tracking of gaps - understanding where needs lie, where risk is/may become elevated
 - ▶ Consistent communication to Senior Leadership - keep critical needs at the forefront

BWH Annual Mock Surveys

- ▶ November 2023 (focused on Engineering spaces) and June 2024 (full hospital)
- ▶ EC and LS focused
- ▶ “Punch lists” for teams, identified high risk areas
 - ▶ Maintain progress on fixes/continuity
- ▶ SAFER matrix - better framed the challenge
 - ▶ Comparison between visits
 - ▶ Communication to all - leadership/team/regulatory
 - ▶ Mock survey “pickier” than JC
 - ▶ Prepare for the worst, hope for the best

Document Reviews

WHAT

- ▶ ITM document reviews
 - ▶ Fire alarm & suppression systems
 - ▶ Features of fire protection
 - ▶ Emergency power systems
 - ▶ Medical gas systems

WHY

- ▶ Help to identify gaps/patterns

WHEN

- ▶ Performed twice/year since 2022



Focused Trainings

WHAT

- ▶ Basics of JC specific to Facilities & Engineering responsibilities

WHY

- ▶ Tailored to document review and mock survey findings
 - ▶ Required timeframes for ITM activities
 - ▶ Best practices for completing documentation
 - ▶ Look for “low hanging fruit”
- ▶ Boots on the ground
 - ▶ Familiarity with systems, processes, resources

WHEN

- ▶ 1 training session/month in year leading up to survey

WHO

- ▶ Various levels - management, supervisors, night shift
- ▶ New *and* seasoned staff!

Communication Strategies

- ▶ Use targeted training sessions to communicate results from mock surveys/document reviews
- ▶ Guide training topics using reports, SAFER matrices
- ▶ Outside, third-party delivery strengthens the message - neutral, not punitive
- ▶ Creates a forum to ask questions, clarify, foster understanding



Results & Lessons Learned

- ▶ No EC/LS condition level findings
- ▶ Team well prepared for JC survey
- ▶ Team continues to improve on day-to-day compliance activities
- ▶ Relationships built to continue to improve and learn
- ▶ Regular cadence allows for:
 - ▶ Frequent training and corrective actions on documentation
 - ▶ Continued focus
 - ▶ Continuous communication with senior leadership regarding priorities and influencing capital funding
 - ▶ Consider communicating at least quarterly
 - ▶ Setting priorities, evaluating strategies

CHANGE IS COMING! New JC Accreditation 360 standards January 2026!

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Questions?