

HEALTH CARE ALERT

EXPERTLY ENGINEERING SAFETY FROM FIRE

BIG CHANGES TO THE JOINT COMMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND THE STATEMENT OF CONDITIONS

The Joint Commission (TJC) released information on June 3rd, 2014 stating that major changes will be made to the Plan for Improvement (PFI) process and Equivalency process currently enforced in an effort to bring TJC more in line with the Centers for Medicare/Medicaid Services (CMS) requirements. The following changes will take effect **JULY 1, 2014**:

- PFIs will still be reported via the Connect website but any open PFIs at the time of survey will be listed on the new "Open PFI" section of the decision report. It is unclear at this time if the open PFIs will effect accreditation decisions.
- Category "C" EPs, which previously permitted up to three occurrences of a specific deficiency before it resulted in a RFI, will now be cited by TJC for a single occurrence. This change effectively takes away the scoring categories. Facilities will also not be permitted to provide clarifying evidence to remove findings from the new Opportunities for Improvement (OFI) report.
- All open PFIs that are six months past their estimated completion date MUST be either: completed, the estimated completion date changed for un-accepted PFIs, or an extension requested for accepted PFIs by no later than **JULY 1, 2014**. PFIs that are not completed within the six month grace period of their estimated completion date may result in an on-site survey.
- Any equivalency submitted to TJC will be reviewed and then submitted to the CMS Region for approval. ONLY CMS regional office will be permitted to grant approval of any and all equivalencies. ILSMs must be in place the entire time the equivalency is being processed by both entities. No specific information was noted about previously approved equivalencies.
- These changes will make the survey report prepared by TJC resemble the Fire Safety Survey Report prepared by CMS.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOUR HEALTH CARE FACILITY???

These are major changes to how health care facilities accredited by TJC have done business for many years. In the long run, these changes will mean that facilities will need to aggressively maintain features of fire protection and life safety within their facilities. Koffel Associates can help you determine the best course of action for your facility. Do not hesitate to contact us with your questions or concerns.