

The April issue of JCI Insight identified the top scored measurable elements for the Joint Commission International Accreditation Standards for Hospitals and Academic Medical Centers (AMC), 6<sup>th</sup> edition for surveys conducted in 2018. The third most frequently cited measurable element was PCI.7ME5 “Clean and sterile supplies are properly stored in designated storage areas that are clean and dry and protected from dust, moisture, and temperature extremes.” The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention included storage of sterile supplies in the 2008 *Guideline for Disinfection and Sterilization in Healthcare Facilities* and the recommendations are reflected in the measurable element. Key points are that the areas are well ventilated and protect the packages from dust, moisture, insects, and temperature and humidity extremes. The packaging should be protected from punctures and tearing of the wrappers and plastic. Compromised packaging of sterile supplies is an indication to not use and should require re-processing. Clean and sterile storage rooms should also have positive air pressure per the Association for the Advancement of Medical Instrumentation ANSI/AAMI ST79.

Examples of actual scored observations from surveys for this measurable element are:

- Clean and sterile supplies were properly stored; however, maintenance of required environmental temperature and humidity could not be demonstrated in the following locations: six labor rooms and the corridor in the Operating Room.
- Sterile supplies such as endotracheal tubes were stored in the ambulance vehicle without temperature or humidity monitoring.
- In the Emergency Department and in the Interventional Radiology Department, the temperature and humidity were not monitored in the area in which clean and sterile supplies were stored.
- In the Endoscopy Department, the storage room for endoscopes had a small fan near the ceiling at the end of the room. The scopes were not stored in a cabinet, but rather open. The fan exhausted directly to the outside environment. The risk of dust or insects entering the room presented a potential risk of contamination of the scopes.
- Sterile supplies were stored in many different carts and cabinets on the ninth and tenth floor units. The temperature and humidity were monitored; however, no action was taken in several days where both measures were above the limit.
- Sterile supplies were stored on wire racks with no solid shelf barriers between the floor and the bottom rack, creating a risk for contamination of the sterile packs during routine cleaning.
- In the 5th floor building C Oncology Unit and 1st floor building C Clinical Unit, sterile supplies were stored in the crash cart drawers which were dusty and dirty.