The April 2019 issue of JCInsight identified the top scored measurable elements for the Joint Commission International Accreditation Standards for Hospitals and Academic Medical Centers (AMC), 6th edition for surveys conducted in 2018. The frequently cited measurable element in ninth place was FMS.5ME1 “The hospital identifies the type, location, and quantities of all hazardous materials and waste and has a complete and current inventory of all such materials within the hospital.” There are many types of hazardous materials and wastes that can be found in healthcare organizations. The World Health Organization (WHO) has identified the following categories of hazardous materials and waste:

- Infectious
- Pathological and anatomical
- Pharmaceutical
- Chemical
- Heavy metals
- Pressurized containers
- Sharps
- Genotoxic/cytotoxic
- Radioactive

To begin to comply with this measurable element, identifying all areas within the organization where the categories of hazardous materials and waste may be located. A thorough search and documenting of the information found on the search regarding the location, the type, and quantities of the found hazardous materials and wastes must be completed. Key to maintaining compliance with this measurable element is continually updating this inventory when changes occur. As these hazardous materials and waste can be found in many areas this can be a challenging standard to maintain compliance, which requires the participation of many.

The following are examples of actual survey findings of this measurable element:

The following were observed:
1. The hospital had an inventory list of all chemicals for each department.
2. Cytotoxic agents were not integrated to the list.
3. Quantity information for hazardous (pressurized gases) was not integrated to the list.
4. Location information for hazardous waste was not integrated to the hazardous waste inventory.

The following were observed regarding hazardous material and waste:
1. The inventory was not current as it did not include maximum allowed quantities for diesel and sulphuric acid.
2. The quantities identified in the inventory did not match for chemicals like cidex, liquid oxygen, chemicals in the elevator room, and gases in the gas manifold.
3. Pharmacy had not identified their hazardous materials and so they were not included on the list.
4. Carbon dioxide and nitrogen gas cylinders were not on the hazardous material list.

The hospital had a current inventory of hazardous materials used throughout the organization; however, generator diesel fuel was not on the list. The complete inventory did not list hazardous materials by location.
The hospital had established a comprehensive inventory system for hazardous materials and waste; however, the radiology hazardous materials stock was not included and the quantity of formalin stored in the specimen room near the operating theatre was 30 liters when the inventory showed less than ten liters.