

# HEALTH CARE ALERT

EXPERTLY ENGINEERING SAFETY FROM FIRE

## Changes to The Joint Commission Plan for Improvement

Starting August 1, 2016, The Joint Commission will no longer review hospital Plans for Improvement (PFIs). Open PFIs on the electronic Statement of Conditions will not be reviewed or included in TJC survey reports. Instead, only those findings noted by TJC surveyors will be included in their survey report which will need to be corrected within 60 days of being identified. If the condition cannot be corrected in that timeframe, there is the possibility that a Time Limited Waiver can be obtained if approved by TJC and the CMS regional office.

It should also be noted that TJC will no longer be evaluating and approving equivalencies except for those addressing conditions noted during a survey. However, that does not prevent facilities from having the equivalency documentation prepared and ready to submit if the condition is noted during a survey.

With the changes taking place, TJC staff has indicated that facilities should strive to have all findings addressed at the time of the TJC survey. This will minimize the impact of any findings that are noted during the survey and will demonstrate to TJC a continued commitment to ensuring compliance.

## What can you do?

Facilities must still comply with the NFPA codes and the PFI process will remain available to facilities as an internal management tool. Koffel Associates encourages facilities to continue utilizing this tool as an effective compliance strategy to lower the potential number of findings identified during a TJC survey. Non-TJC survey identified PFIs can be corrected over a reasonable period of time, but preferably before the next survey. As noted above, findings identified during a survey will typically need to be corrected within 60 days.

Regular fire and life safety compliance surveys and assessments are a critical part of a health care facility's compliance program. The identification and resolution of fire and life safety deficiencies, even if the facility does not upload and report those findings on the eSOC website, remains an effective method of managing life safety compliance between TJC surveys. This process also assists the facility in maintaining up-to-date Life Safety Plans as required by TJC.

Please contact us if you have questions or concerns about how this change will affect your facility.

## Open Forum just added to Koffel conference- Register Today!

The Forum is intended to involve an open discussion regarding two recent changes to the survey process:

- The adoption of the 2012 Edition of NFPA 101 by CMS and Accrediting Organizations
- The TJC announcement that the current PFI process will change effective August 1, 2016

The Forum is open to all in-person conference attendees and will take place at 4:15 pm on July 21, 2016 after the Ask the Expert panel session.