THE JOINT COMMISSION
MEDICATION MANAGEMENT STANDARDS:

STORAGE AND SECURITY OF MEDICATIONS

The Joint Commission (TJC) has issued Medication Management standards since 2004. There are 8 sections and 20 elements of performance providing detailed guidelines and recommendations for storage and security of medications. One of the biggest areas of non-compliance is medication storage (by most surveys, consistently 30% or more). The majority of these deficiencies involve long term employees with unblemished records. Humans are fallible, and manual processes foster a system that allows errors to occur.

In a Q&A interview conducted by Pharmacy Purchasing and Products magazine (November 2015 - Vol. 12 No. 11 - Page #30), Jeannell M. Mansur, RPh, PharmD, FASHP, FSMSO, CJCP, Practice Leader, Medication Safety, Joint Commission Resources, outlined significant compliance challenges the Joint Commission has identified. Some highlights of this interview are excerpted in the highlighted area to the right:

- **"THE TOP JOINT COMMISSION COMPLIANCE ISSUES OVER THE PAST YEAR ARE CONSISTENT WITH THOSE OF PREVIOUS YEARS. STORAGE AND SECURITY OF MEDICATIONS WAS THE MOST CHALLENGING; 35% OF ORGANIZATIONS WERE NONCOMPLIANT WITH THIS STANDARD...."**
- **"THIS YEAR'S COMPLIANCE CHALLENGES ILLUSTRATE THAT WE ARE NOT DOING ENOUGH TO AFFECT AND SUSTAIN IMPROVEMENTS."**
- **"MM.03.01.01 STORAGE AND SECURITY OF MEDICATIONS. STORING AND SECURING MEDICATIONS CONTINUES TO CHALLENGE MORE THAN ONE-THIRD OF HOSPITALS. IN THE PAST, SURVEYORS NOTED THAT FACILITIES OFTEN WERE NONCOMPLIANT DUE TO IMPROPER MONITORING OF REFRIGERATOR TEMPERATURES."**
- **"IN ADDITION, HOSPITALS MAY BE CITED FOR NONCOMPLIANCE WITH THIS STANDARD FOR FAILING TO COMPLY WITH THEIR INTERNAL CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE STORAGE POLICY AND NOT TAKING STEPS TO PREVENT DRUG DIVERSION. MM.03.01.01 EP 3 STATES, "THE HOSPITAL STORES ALL MEDICATIONS AND BIOLOGICALS, INCLUDING CONTROLLED (SCHEDULED) MEDICATIONS, IN A SECURED AREA TO PREVENT DIVERSION, AND LOCKED WHEN NECESSARY, IN ACCORDANCE WITH LAW AND REGULATION." JOINT COMMISSION SURVEYORS WILL INQUIRE AS TO THE STEPS HOSPITALS ARE TAKING TO DETECT AND PREVENT DIVERSION WITHIN THEIR WALLS."**
- **"DRUG DETECTION PREVENTION SOFTWARE HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY SOPHISTICATED AND IS HIGHLY EFFECTIVE AT IDENTIFYING PATTERNS OF POTENTIAL DRUG DIVERSION."**

INTELLIGUARD® RFID SOLUTIONS SUPPORT MANY OF THE "RED FLAGS" ON THE JOINT COMMISSION'S RADAR

The following table highlights TJC Medication Management Standards and how IntelliGuard® RFID Solutions enable pharmacy teams to maintain control over floor stock and offer workflow automation and reporting to help ensure compliance with these standards.

MM Chapter	Description	Element of Performance	IntelliGuard® RFID Solutions Benefit
MM.01.01.03	The hospital safely manages high-alert and hazardous medications.	The hospital has a process for managing high-alert and hazardous medications.	Ease identification of Look-Alike/Sound-Alike drugs when replenishing procedural and emergency kits and trays Provide real-time visibility to remote medication inventory including who, what and when medication is dispensed or stocked Document usage to identify patterns of behavior that indicate potential drug diversion
MM.03.01.01	The hospital safely stores medications.	The hospital stores medications ccording to the manufacturers' recommendations. The hospital stores all medications and biologicals, including controlled (scheduled) medications, in a secured area to prevent diversion, and locked when necessary. The hospital prevents unauthorized individuals from obtaining medications. The hospital removes all expired, damaged, and/or contaminated medications and stores them separately from medications available for administration.	Offer controlled temperature cabinets to ensure proper storage of medications Deliver continuous, automated temperature monitoring and prompt alerting to address the problem quickly when a refrigerator goes out of range Provide item level inventory detail of excursions to determine whether drugs remain stable for the length of time the temperature was out of range. Provide data tracking, alerting and reporting to ensure there are no expired medications Allow proper management of refrigerated Offer secure storage and access to medications in the operating room
MM.05.01.17	The hospital follows a process to retrieve recalled or discontinued medications.	The hospital implements its policy on retrieving and handling medications when they are recalled or discontinued for safety reasons.	Offer search functionality by lot #, NDC or medication name to identify, locate and promptly retrieve recalled / discontinued items
MM.05.01.19	The hospital safely manages returned medications	The hospital implements its process for managing unused, expired, or returned medications.	Provide a system to reconcile medication when pharmacy restocks procedural and emergency kits and trays
MM.08.01.01	The hospital evaluates the effectiveness of its medication management system.	The hospital analyzes data on its medication management system. The hospital compares data over time to identify risk points, levels of performance, patterns, trends, and variations of its medication management system.	Put pharmacy in control of all practices for drug storage and medication distribution and control issues Provide actionable data and reporting to identify risks, patterns and trends

Please note: This table is for information purposes only, and should not be interpreted as an exhaustive list of TJC medication management standards. Rather, please use it as an information tool to discover how Intelliguard® RFID Solutions can provide safeguards, alerting and workflow automation that support many of The Joint Commission's elements of performance.

Today, hospitals and health systems have the benefit of RFID technology that allows them to take action to minimize medication management risks. IntelliGuard® Solutions employ radio frequency identification (RFID) technology to manage pharmaceutical inventory and enable safe, efficient workflows to support many of the medication management storage and security standards imposed on hospital and health system pharmacies. Contact us to learn more.

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Sources:
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