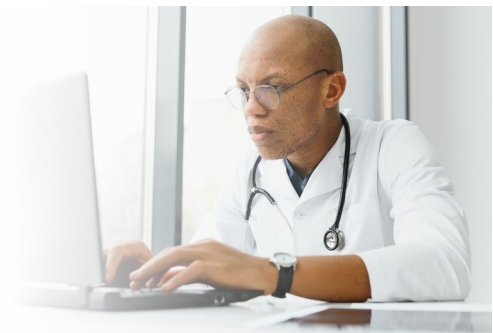


7 Q&As to Help Hospitals Understand **Accreditation 360** Changes



The effective date of The Joint Commission's (TJC's) Accreditation 360 is right around the corner!

Hospitals naturally have questions and concerns about their upcoming obligations. Below are seven questions and answers to guide covered organizations through this critical transition.



1. What is Accreditation 360?

"Accreditation 360: The New Standard" is a bold move recently announced by TJC to transform its healthcare accreditation and certification process. The changes take effect January 1, 2026, to more closely reflect federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) regulations.

2. What are the key changes with the revamped Accreditation 360 system?



The latest Accreditation 360 approach significantly slashes the number of elements of performance in the TJC standards. The system also flags the binding CMS Conditions of Participation (CoPs) within the accreditation manual to help direct hospitals as they prioritize their compliance efforts. What's more, actionable National Performance Goals, certifications that look at "outcome measures," a "SAFEST Program" resource, and ongoing survey readiness are part of the new system.

7 Q&As to Help Hospitals Understand Accreditation 360 Changes (continued)

3. With Accreditation 360, how does the upcoming Physical Environment (PE) chapter differ from the existing Environment of Care (EC) and Life Safety (LS) chapters?

The EC and LS chapters are combined to form the new and cohesive PE chapter. The reimagined PE chapter adheres to the CMS CoPs language for less ambiguity. It eliminates or consolidates over 40 standards down to just eight. What's more, the number of elements of performance is compressed by almost 50 percent.



4. Because the PE chapter has fewer elements of performance than the EC and LS chapters combined, does it mean the old requirements will fall away once Accreditation 360 takes effect?

Hospitals should not assume they will have fewer requirements. The number of elements of performance has plummeted, but the overhauled Physical Environment elements are also less prescriptive. Many of these broadly worded elements of performance may still encompass all the “old” requirements, even though they’re no longer found in the text. TJC offers a crosswalk to aid hospitals as they navigate from the EC and LS standards to the PE standards.

5. What major challenges might hospitals face when transitioning to TJC Accreditation 360 standards?

During the transition, hospitals will face challenges aligning policies, procedures, and training to the new PE chapter; updating all compliance tools; and avoiding survey gaps. The biggest risks are confusion over reorganized requirements, missed inspections, and overlooking NFPA/CMS code details while adapting to the new format.



7 Q&As to Help Hospitals Understand Accreditation 360 Changes (continued)

6. How can hospitals prepare for TJC Accreditation 360?

Hospitals can get ready by mapping old EC and LS standards to the new PE chapter; updating all policies, checklists, and compliance tools; and providing targeted staff training on the reorganized requirements. They should also validate that monitoring processes still capture NFPA and CMS code details, run mock surveys using the new format, and close any gaps before their next accreditation visit.

7. Why is it important for hospitals to begin preparing for Accreditation 360 early and not wait for January 1, 2026?

Because the transition impacts policies, training, and compliance systems, starting early gives hospitals time to identify gaps, update documents, and train staff without rushing. Waiting until January 2026 risks incomplete preparation, survey readiness issues, and potential findings if surveyors arrive before processes are fully aligned with the new standards.

Keep Your Facility in Compliance with Healthcare Safety Requirements

J. J. Keller's **Healthcare Consulting Services** provide the insights and assistance you need to minimize your facility's risk areas, comply with the regulatory requirements and prepare for Accreditation 360.



Accreditation Mock Survey

This onsite mock survey focuses on TJC Life Safety, Environment of Care, and Emergency Management accreditation standards the exact same way it would be conducted by a Life Safety surveyor.

Document Review & Support

We'll meticulously evaluate your records to ensure they're meeting TJC Environment of Care, Life Safety, and Emergency Management standards.

Life Safety Assessment

This onsite assessment evaluates whether your building's Life Safety systems meet TJC and NFPA 101 Life Safety requirements.

Workplace Violence Assessment

We'll review your facility's physical environment and its workplace violence program, including policies and procedures, injury reports, staff training and more.

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