

Tip #4: Management of Medical Equipment for Patient Care

The Risk: Many procedures are performed in the office setting using physician-owned or leased medical equipment. Failure or malfunction of this equipment may lead to patient, staff or provider injury. The appropriate maintenance of this equipment is essential to patient safety.

Recommendations:

1. A process should be in place for maintenance of medical equipment. The manufacturers' directions for use and recommended preventative maintenance schedule should be followed.
2. A record of all maintenance activities should be generated and retained.
3. All patient care equipment should be inspected on an annual basis at a minimum, or more often if recommended by the manufacturer.
4. Equipment should be labeled with the inspection date, the initials of the inspector, and the date that the next inspection is due.
5. A designated staff member should confirm that all required inspections and preventative maintenance of equipment is performed at appropriate intervals.
6. Relevant staff should be properly trained in the use of medical equipment. Documentation of training and education should be maintained in their personnel files.
7. The scope of practice of medical personnel/licensed staff must be considered when they perform or assist in a procedure and/or use medical equipment.
8. A process should be in place that requires the immediate removal of malfunctioning equipment from use in the practice. This process should include a provision to sequester any piece of equipment which may be directly involved in injury to a patient, staff, or provider. Prompt notification to your medical professional liability insurance carrier is recommended when an equipment related patient injury occurs.