Have You Inspected Your Hospital Recently?

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Will Rogers said, “Even if you’re on the right track, you won’t get anywhere if you’re standing still.”

What he was saying to veterinary professionals is, even if you’ve created a great hospital safety program, it won’t stay great unless you give it regular attention. One of the best ways to give your safety program regular attention is through hospital self-inspections led by the safety coordinator.

A hospital self-inspection is not just a one-time event that occurs when you set up your safety program; it needs to be an ongoing process and should include all hospital employees. Cal/OSHA has found that many safety and health self-inspections are performed too infrequently, or not performed at all.

To begin, take a systematic approach to the self-inspection so that you do not leave out anything. There are inspection forms in the CVMA’s regulatory guide that will help you.

Use Form 9: CVMA Regulatory Checklist Cal/OSHA Compliance Self-Inspection to go through your hospital thoroughly and make sure everything is still in compliance. This form guides you through a complete inspection of the hospital and also allows you to see if there are items that have not been kept up. This is also a good time to go through Section 2030 of the California Code of Regulations and make sure you are compliant with the regulations on minimum standards for veterinary premises.

Once a month the safety coordinator for the hospital should go through the hospital and fill out Form 8: Inspection Summary & Action Plan. With this information from their safety coordinator, practice managers and owners can see what needs to be done, develop a plan addressing any issues, and make safety improvements each month.

The cornerstone of a Cal/OSHA safety program is employee communication coupled with utilizing a team approach. Part of that is encouraging employees to fill out Form 3: Report of Workplace Hazard. This allows management to mitigate any hazards by making changes that will prevent injuries in the workplace.

CVMA Interactive Regulatory Guide

California has some of the strictest safety requirements in the nation and violations can result in fines into the tens of thousands of dollars. The best way to avoid fines is to create a safe work environment, regularly monitor your facility and protocols, and make changes. The CVMA’s electronic Regulatory Guide helps practice owners maintain hospital safety compliance.

The CVMA can help you get compliant and stay compliant. The CVMA Regulatory Guide helps practice owners understand state regulations and create their customized safety program in an innovative online format. The CVMA Regulatory Guide can be ordered for $250 on CVMA.net by CVMA members. Once your safety program is established, you should stay current by subscribing to yearly updates through the CVMA.

For many hospitals, it has been a long time since their Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP) was put into place. Personnel, including the safety coordinator, may have changed and management may not know if all the aspects of the program are still in place, or if the safety program is compliant with state regulatory standards.

Ensuring hospital compliance is not a one-time event. While it seems like it is time consuming and we are often “too busy” to get to the task, it is good business to make sure we are maintaining a professional, safe environment. The cost of injuries, Cal/OSHA violation “fix and fines,” and expensive repairs from lack of maintenance can impact the ability to provide healthcare to patients and clients. This is a case of an ounce of prevention being worth a pound of cure.