

IPC made easy

Your Key to Understanding Infection Prevention and Control

Second Edition



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Development Team

Associate Director, Editorial, Books/Digital

Subscriptions: Phyllis Crittenden

Senior Project Manager: Heather Yang

Associate Director, Production: Johanna Harris

Executive Director, Global Publishing: Catherine Chopp
Hinckley, MA, PhD

Reviewers

Joint Commission Division of Accreditation and Certification Operations

Diane M. Cullen, MSN, MBA, RN, CIC

Joint Commission Division of Healthcare Quality Evaluation

Katie Reff, MSN, RN, Project Director, Healthcare Standards Development, Department of Standards and Survey Methods

Natalya Rosenberg, PhD, RN, Project Director, Healthcare Standards Development, Department of Standards and Survey Methods

Joint Commission International

Chinhak Chun, MD, American Board of Internal Medicine, Certified Specialist in Internal Medicine and Infectious Disease, Physician Consultant, Global Consulting

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Introduction

Note: At the time of publication, the “Infection Prevention and Control” (IC) chapter of The Joint Commission’s *Comprehensive Accreditation Manuals* and corresponding E-edition is being revised to better align with the language of the US Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) requirements. Updates and revisions to the IC chapter are scheduled to become effective July 1, 2024, for several accreditation programs. Although requirement numbers may change, the overarching concepts will remain. As always, readers are encouraged to refer to the most current version of IC standards available for their program setting.

The Big Idea

On March 11, 2020, The World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic, following outbreaks of illness and death in several countries stemming from the SARS-CoV-2 virus. In the United States, the COVID-19 pandemic tested the nation more than any other crisis has in decades, placing an unprecedented burden on the health care industry and leading to increased workforce shortages, exhaustion and trauma, and supply chain issues. Because keeping patients and staff safe from infections of all kinds is and always has been a daily concern of health care providers, the COVID-19 pandemic made the work of preventing and controlling infection a greater challenge across all health care settings.

At the time of this publication, the public health emergency in the United States has been lifted, and many lessons have been learned from the pandemic, including the mechanism of transmission, which led to effective vaccines and evidence-based infection control protocols to protect frontline health care workers, patients, support staff, and the community. Effective strategies to combat the spread of infection are vitally important. If you work in a health care organization, part of your job is to manage infection risks. Everyone is responsible for infection prevention and control (IC), even if you are not the leader of your organization’s IC program. This book is designed to help all health care professionals, regardless of their role, to better understand IC. This book aims to make IC easy for you.

This Book Is for You

IC Made Easy: Your Guide to Understanding Infection Prevention and Control, Second Edition, is aimed at four major audiences: accreditation and safety professionals, facilities directors and engineers, clinicians, and leadership at various levels. Although infection preventionists don’t need to be introduced to the basics of IC, this book is also a helpful refresher and a resource for IC professionals to share with others in their organization who need to better understand IC.

You're an accreditation or safety professional: You're charged with overseeing overall Joint Commission or Joint Commission International (JCI) standards compliance. You've got the standards down, but you could use some help navigating the complexities of IC. This book explains complicated IC concepts to better help you deal with safety compliance issues and challenges.

You're a facilities director or engineer: You maintain a safe environment in your organization by assessing potential hazards or risks, evaluating and implementing preventive measures, and ensuring preparation for emergency response. This book helps you understand compliance related to IC. It will help your health care organization provide a safe environment for patients and staff, free from infection.

You're a clinician: You are a caregiver in a health care organization. You work directly in providing patient care, treatment, and service as a nurse, care technician, physician, or other direct caregiver. This book will help to better acquaint you with infection risks, the dangers to staff and patients, and how to prevent them.

You're in a leadership position: Your job is to understand how your staff can mitigate infection and provide the resources needed to prevent it. You need to know how to handle the myriad dangers of infection, how it can affect staff and patients, and what to do to control it. This book gives you the background to prepare for and understand conversations with your infection preventionists, facilities staff, and accreditation and safety professionals. It will give you confidence in your decisions regarding IC protocols.

You're working together: In a health care organization, you never work alone. You are a team. This book is designed to help all of you to better communicate and collaborate for IC.

- **Infection preventionist:** You're THE expert in your organization for IC. You are responsible for your organization's policies and procedures regarding infection and ensuring that those policies and procedures are followed properly. You know your stuff but would love an easy-to-use reference or a resource to share with others. (And sometimes, it's kind of nice to have a refresher for yourself.)
- **Accreditation professionals:** You need to know a lot about a lot of different areas of your health care organization. IC is a big one. Maybe you aren't 100% familiar with all the latest IC guidelines and protocols, but you are still responsible for ensuring that your organization is following Joint Commission standards, CMS Conditions of Participation, and best practices. You can go over concepts in this book to enhance your understanding. It's also nice to use this book to "translate" IC concepts for clinicians and leadership.

- **Facilities directors and health care engineers:** You can use this book to help better identify and manage risks related to infection and the physical environment, get up to speed on and/or update your knowledge of IC concepts, and then be able to communicate with others on the health care team, including accreditation professionals and leadership.
- **Leaders:** You can use the book to prime yourself for any and all discussions of IC with accreditation, safety, clinical, or facilities staff. You know that IC is a priority, and you need to know and understand the lingo and the concepts. This book will help you do that.

This Book Is for All Settings

Whether you are addressing infections in a hospital operating room, laboratory, outpatient facility, or residential health facility, this book will present Joint Commission standards and solutions related to IC in your area of responsibility, although some differences do exist across these various care settings. This book also discusses JCI requirements and compliance solutions for health care organizations around the globe.

This Book Focuses on the Basics

No matter what your job is or in what setting you perform that job, you will benefit from a guide to IC that's easy to understand and reference. This book is it. Below is an introduction to the basic concepts of IC in health care organizations, how to identify problems, and how to implement strategies to prevent infection in the first place.

Standards related to IC appear in the Joint Commission accreditation manual chapter "Infection Prevention and Control" (IC) and the Joint Commission International accreditation manual chapter "Prevention and Control of Infections" (PCI).

Basic elements: IC is made up of three basic elements to mitigate risk:

- **Planning:** This includes responsibility, resources, risks, and goals needed to prevent infection.
- **Implementation:** This includes medical equipment, devices, supplies, and vaccinations that support patient care in your facility, as well as the human actions necessary to prevent the transmission of infections.
- **Evaluation and improvement:** These include the important steps for a health care organization to sustain its efforts to control and prevent infection.

Basic risk areas and manual chapters: Joint Commission and JCI accreditation standards are designed to address risks. IC is such an important activity that both The Joint Commission and JCI have dedicated an entire chapter of accreditation requirements to the topic.

- **Safety:** This area addresses risks usually related to unanticipated incidents that occur during everyday tasks, in the physical structure, or



The Joint Commission accredits and certifies more than 22,000 health care organizations and programs in the United States. Joint Commission accreditation and certification are recognized nationwide as a symbol of quality that reflects your organization's commitment to meeting certain performance standards. Infection prevention and control comprises a significant portion of Joint Commission standards and National Patient Safety Goals.

Note: *The standards addressed in this book were in effect at the time of this publication. They refer to Joint Commission standards effective January 1, 2023. Always consult the most recent version of Joint Commission standards for your setting for the most accurate requirements.*



Joint Commission International (JCI) identifies, evaluates, and shares best practices in quality and patient safety around the world. JCI has accredited more than 1,000 health care organizations globally. Leadership and innovative solutions are provided to help health care organizations improve performance and outcomes. JCI's expert team works with hospitals, academic medical centers, government ministries of health, and public health agencies to achieve peak performance in patient care and safety. Infection prevention and control is a key area of JCI requirements for health care organizations.

Note: *The standards addressed in this book were in effect at the time of this publication. They refer to Joint Commission International Accreditation Standards for Hospitals, Seventh Edition, ©2020. Always consult the most recent version of Joint Commission International standards for your hospital or medical center setting for the most accurate requirements.*

due to uncontrollable factors. It also includes ensuring worker safety and maintaining a healthy environment, one that is infection free.

- **Hazardous materials and waste:** To be compliant, you must manage hazardous materials and waste from the time they enter the facility to the time they leave it. This area is all about managing the many risks in all the processes for handling these materials.
- **Medical equipment:** This area addresses risks related to equipment used in monitoring, treatment, diagnosis, or direct care of patients. Inventory, inspection, testing, and maintenance are primary activities in managing these risks.

Organization and Format

This book is organized in a way that makes it easy to find the information you need quickly. All content is clearly labeled and consistently formatted, with core and extra features distinguished for targeted reading.

IC Made Easy, Second Edition is organized into two parts:

Part I: Build a Solid Foundation

- Chapter 1: Understand the Accreditation Process
- Chapter 2: Prioritize Patient Safety
- Chapter 3: Develop an IC Plan and Build a Program

Part II: Comply with Infection Prevention and Control Standards and Goals

- Chapter 4: Prevent Transmission of Infections
- Chapter 5: Prevent Health Care–Associated Infections
- Chapter 6: Provide Safe Medical Equipment, Devices, and Supplies
- Chapter 7: Manage Infection Prevention and Control in the Physical Environment
- Chapter 8: Evaluate and Improve Your Infection Prevention and Control Plan

Chapter features: Each chapter includes the same types of features, so navigation is easy. And in the e-book, internal links allow you to easily search for terms and navigate across chapters. Links also take you directly to downloadable, customizable tools.

This chart shows the chapter features in this book. Some features appear in the margins to correspond to the core content.

Chapter Feature	Purpose of Feature
The Big Idea	Presents the overall chapter topic/provides an overview.
Key Concepts	Highlights core ideas.
Relevant Requirements	Lists pertinent standards and elements of performance (EPs) from the <i>Comprehensive Accreditation Manual (CAM)</i> or E-dition® chapters. (Always consult the most current requirements for your accreditation setting.)
In Other Words	Defines key terms in plain language. No jargon!
Collaboration	Highlights how leaders, infection preventionists, accreditation professionals, and other staff members can work together.
Try This Tool	Links downloadable, customizable tools in the e-book and explains how they can be used.
Smart Questions	Asks questions to begin focused discussion on infection prevention and control topics.
Picture THIS	Highlights important topics and concepts visually.

New to This Edition

Since the first edition of *IC Made Easy* published in 2019, a lot has happened, including a global pandemic. Joint Commission requirements in the IC chapter of the *Comprehensive Accreditation Manuals (CAMs)* and corresponding E-ditions have been revised and updated. This second edition of *IC Made Easy* reflects the most current requirements, effective January 1, 2023.

Furthermore, because infection prevention and control is a perennial challenge in all health care settings, many HCOs continue to seek clarification about IC standards and how best to comply with requirements. In fact, according to The Joint Commission’s full-year 2022 noncompliance data, IC requirements made the list of the most frequently cited higher-risk requirements for nearly all accreditation programs. Requirements related to use of standard precautions as well as those related to risk of infection associated with medical equipment, devices, and supplies were frequently scored for noncompliance.

IC Made Easy, Second Edition continues to address the basic questions from hand hygiene to the more complex issues related to cleaning, disinfection, and sterilization. This new edition offers the latest evidence-based practices, recommendations, and strategies for improving quality and patient safety through compliance with Joint Commission and Joint Commission International standards. Other updates reflected in this new edition include the following:

- Updates to National Patient Safety Goals® (NPSGs), moved to the IC chapter
- Revisions to International Patient Safety Goals (IPSGs) related to health care–associated infections

- Updates to vaccination requirements for some settings, including influenza and COVID-19 vaccinations
- New water management requirements for select health care settings to reduce the risk of infection in the physical environment from waterborne pathogens, such as *Legionella*
- Lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic related to procurement, selection, and use of personal protective equipment; universal source control interventions, such as face masks and hand hygiene; and communicating with internal and external partners to manage and plan for an influx of infectious patients, and more
- More than two dozen new downloadable tools that can be customized to address infection control challenges in all settings

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