The Joint Commission

Toolkit for New Accreditation Professionals

FOURTH EDITION

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Introduction

Welcome to the *Toolkit for New Accreditation Professionals*, Fourth Edition. The *Toolkit for New Accreditation Professionals* will introduce you to The Joint Commission and will lead accreditation professionals, like you, through the Joint Commission accreditation process—from the electronic application for accreditation (E-App) to the survey and accreditation decision and beyond into continuous compliance. This book introduces concepts critical to your position, with activities to get you started applying those concepts in your everyday responsibilities.

WHO SHOULD READ THIS BOOK?

Everyone. Obviously, if you are charged with monitoring and ensuring compliance with Joint Commission standards at your organization or department, this book is for you. But compliance is everyone's job. Health care leaders, clinical staff, environment of care specialists, building managers, and anyone else who does work to maintain and sustain compliance with Joint Commission requirements can benefit from the information and tools contained in this book.

WHY YOU NEED THIS BOOK

Becoming accredited and maintaining accreditation are immensely complex and cross-disciplinary endeavors. Accreditation has lots of moving parts. Each health care organization is different, of course, but this book serves as a primer for anyone who needs an overview of the accreditation process or who is responsible for a substantial part of it.

THE SCOPE OF THIS BOOK

This *Toolkit* is a guide to help you—an accreditation professional—better understand The Joint Commission and the many facets of the accreditation process and its requirements. In addition to offering accreditation, The Joint Commission has standalone and accreditation program–specific certifications for care and services provided for nearly any chronic disease or condition. The Joint Commission also offers other types of certification not connected to diseases or conditions such as healthcare sustainability and health care equity. The Joint Commission also offers one verification program for maternal levels of care. Although there are many similarities among the accreditation, certification, and verification processes, there also are many differences. This book focuses on the accreditation process. Although there is some discussion on Joint Commission certifications and verification, these discussions are included to tie them together with accreditation. We encourage you to visit The Joint Commission's website or contact your account executive for additional information—including eligibility requirements and the review process—on certification and verification programs your organization is interested in pursuing.

WHAT'S NEW IN THIS EDITION

In addition to updated resources and information, changes to the fourth edition of the *Toolkit* include the following new content:

- Top Challenging Standards at the beginning of applicable standards chapters in Part 4
- Test Your Knowledge quiz at the end of each chapter
- New sidebars on Joint Commission priorities (health care equity, sustainable healthcare, and workforce safety and well-being)
- Joint Commission and National Quality Forum strategic affiliation
- New certification and verification programs (Maternal Levels of Care Verification, Advanced Certification in Perinatal Care, Health Care Equity Certification, Sustainable Healthcare Certification, and Memory Care Certification)
- Evidence of Standards Compliance (ESC) tool (filled-out example)
- Patient safety topic portals
- Cybersecurity as it relates to records and information technology

Throughout this new edition, material previously included in the relevant chapters of the third edition has been moved to the appendices to minimize repetition and intrusion. For example, there is a "Recommended Resources" section that directs you to additional Joint Commission–related content, as well as other references to support you as you learn about or refresh your knowledge of these topics. Finally, the dozens of tools included in the *Toolkit* have been meticulously reviewed to ensure their accuracy and updated or replaced as applicable. This edition is accurate as of the publication date.

HOW THIS BOOK IS ORGANIZED

This new edition of the book is broken down into four parts:

- **Part 1: Understanding The Joint Commission.** Chapters 1 and 2. Covers the basics of The Joint Commission, its mission and vision, and the accreditation programs.
- **Part 2: Understanding the Accreditation Process.** Chapters 3–6. Provides an in-depth look at the process of obtaining and maintaining Joint Commission accreditation.
- **Part 3: Understanding Joint Commission–Related Data.** Chapters 7 and 8. Takes you on a deep dive into proven methods for working with performance measures and collecting, analyzing, and using meaningful data to drive compliance, improvement, and change.
- **Part 4: Understanding Challenging Standards.** Chapters 9–19. Focuses on and lists the major standards topics and provides a starting point for addressing challenging compliance areas. Each of these chapters includes "Key Concepts," which are important aspects of the relevant standards areas that will help you focus your thinking about compliance. The "Why Do I Need to Know This Now?" and "Where Do I Start?" features will help you tie concepts presented in each chapter to your real-world experience as an accreditation professional and provide direction for how to begin addressing concerns. Each of the standards-focused chapters includes a section on "Critical Challenges" to help you understand particularly challenging aspects of standards and/or elements of performance (EPs). And at the end of each chapter we have included tools we think you will find useful as you get started.

BOOK FEATURES

Each chapter includes the same types of features presented in the same order, so navigation is easy. And in the e-book version, internal links allow you to easily search for terms and navigate across chapters. (For example, terms that appear in the Glossary in the print version are shown in red text.)

Information is presented in clear, concise language in a colorful and easy-to-follow format that includes a variety of valuable features, including the following:

The Manual	➔	Relevant *Comprehensive Accreditation Manual* chapters identified here are applicable to the content of the chapter.
The Big Idea	➔	Presents the chapter theme/overview.
Key Concepts	➔	Each chapter highlights 2–6 important ideas.
Why Do I Need to Know This Now?	➔	Summarizes why each key concept is crucial to the safety of care recipients and accreditation success.
Where Do I Start?	➔	Recommends practical activities for learning and applying the key concepts.
Critical Challenges	➔	Gives an overview of challenging requirements across programs that have recently been most frequently cited by surveyors.
Picture This	➔	Offers a visual presentation of a critical concept.
Just Imagine...	➔	Provides a brief scenario that illustrates an important issue.
I Heard That...	➔	Shares common standards-related "myths" and their rebuttals.
Priority	➔	New sidebars detail Joint Commission priorities
Test Your Knowledge	➔	Each chapter closes with a knowledge check.
Tools	➔	Delivers downloadable, customizable tools.

TOOLS AND RESOURCES

The majority of the chapters include customizable tools. Near the end of the book is a section titled "Recommended Resources." The resources include links to further information on Joint Commission enterprise websites and government agency websites to help you address and understand the concepts discussed in the book.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

Throughout this book you will encounter commonly used acronyms pertaining to your job, health care, and the Joint Commission accreditation process. These include the abbreviations used to refer to The Joint Commission's hard-copy *Comprehensive Accreditation Manual* and manual chapters; the following is a quick reference for these terms:

Manual Title Acronym	Manual Title
CAMAC	*Comprehensive Accreditation Manual for Ambulatory Care*
CAMALC	*Comprehensive Accreditation Manual for Assisted Living Communities*
CAMBHC	*Comprehensive Accreditation Manual for Behavioral Health Care and Human Services*
CAMCAH	*Comprehensive Accreditation Manual for Critical Access Hospitals*
CAMH	*Comprehensive Accreditation Manual for Hospitals*
CAMHC	*Comprehensive Accreditation Manual for Home Care*
CAMLAB	*Comprehensive Accreditation Manual for Laboratory and Point-of-Care Testing*
CAMNCC	*Comprehensive Accreditation Manual for Nursing Care Centers*
CAMOBS	*Comprehensive Accreditation Manual for Office-Based Surgery Practices*

Chapter Title Acronym	Manual Chapter Title
ACC	The Accreditation Process
APR	Accreditation Participation Requirements
DC	Document and Process Control
EC	Environment of Care®
EM	Emergency Management
EQ	Equipment Management
ESP	Early Survey Policy
HR*	Human Resources
IC	Infection Prevention and Control
IM	Information Management
LD	Leadership
LS	Life Safety
MC	Medication Compounding
MM	Medication Management
MS	Medical Staff
NPSG	National Patient Safety Goals®
NR	Nursing
PC†	Provision of Care, Treatment, and Services
PCMH	Primary Care Medical Home Certification Option
PI	Performance Improvement
PM	Performance Measurement and the ORYX® Initiative

* In the *CAMBHC*, this chapter is titled "Human Resources Management" (HRM).

† In the *CAMBHC*, this chapter is titled "Care, Treatment, and Services" (CTS).

Chapter Title Acronym	Manual Chapter Title
PS[‡]	Patient Safety Systems
QR	The Joint Commission Quality Report
QSA	Quality System Assessment for Nonwaived Testing
RC	Record of Care, Treatment, and Services
RI	Rights and Responsibilities of the Individual
RWD	Required Written Documentation
SAG	Standards Applicability Grid
SE	Sentinel Event Policy
TS	Transplant Safety
WT	Waived Testing

JOINT COMMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Accreditation is achieved through compliance with Joint Commission standards, which are available to your organization through two distinct mediums. As an accreditation professional in your organization, you have complimentary access to E-dition® through your organization's secure *Joint Commission Connect*® extranet site. This complimentary access allows for one single user at a time in E-dition. E-dition provides access to the standards your organization is accredited under. Joint Commission Resources (JCR) also publishes a for-sale book or e-book version of the *Comprehensive Accreditation Manual* for most health care settings. JCR also sells software, specifically unlimited user access to E-dition as well as an assessment tool built on top of E-dition called Tracers with AMP. See the JCR website for more information about these for-sale options. Please note that it is not necessary to purchase these products to become or remain accredited. In addition, accreditation process information can be found on E-dition and in the book or e-book version of the manual. The standards and accreditation process information posted on E-dition and published in the book or e-book manuals are identical. Exceptions to this alignment include instances when there are interim releases to E-dition that do not fall into the regularly scheduled biannual (January 1 or July 1) releases or for book or e-book versions of manuals that are published once a year.

A WORD ABOUT TERMINOLOGY

The health care field is vast and provides care, treatment, and services to many individuals who may identify as a patient, an individual served, a resident, or a client. To respect this diverse field, the term *care recipient* has been used—as applicable—throughout the *Toolkit* to describe individuals who receive or have received care, treatment, and/or services.

[‡] In the *CAMBHC*, this chapter is titled "Safety Systems for Individuals Served" (SSIS); in CAMALC, this chapter is titled "Resident Safety Systems" (RSS).

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