

MLMIC Risk Management Tips

Tip #4: Failure or Malfunction of Office Equipment

The Risk: More procedures are being performed in the office practice setting than ever before and more physicians own or lease office equipment. Failure or malfunction of office equipment can lead to patient, staff or provider injury. Therefore, providing for the safety of patient, staff and providers by performing necessary inspections and maintenance of equipment is an important part of office practices today.

Recommendations:

1. Written policies and procedures must be developed to define the use and maintenance of office equipment. The manufacturers' directions for use and their recommended schedules for preventative maintenance must be followed.
2. A written log of all maintenance activities must be maintained and retained.
3. A specific staff member must be designated to be responsible to confirm that all required inspections and maintenance of equipment have been performed at the proper intervals.
4. All patient care equipment must be inspected on an annual basis at a minimum, or more often if recommended by the manufacturer
5. All patient care equipment must be tagged to reflect the inspection date, the initials of the inspector, and the date the next inspection is due.
6. All staff must be properly trained in the use of all equipment. Documentation of training and education must be maintained in their personnel files.
7. Equipment must only be used by an employee if it is within the applicable scope of practice for that employee. This includes licensed professionals. This must be determined prior to the employee being trained and/or using the equipment.

8. Every piece of equipment that malfunctions must immediately be removed from service, and labeled as defective. The written office policy must contain a provision to sequester any piece of equipment which may be directly involved in injury to a patient, staff, or provider. Prompt notification to MLMIC is recommended when an equipment-related injury occurs.