Methodist Charlton Medical Center

Siemens Fire Services for Healthcare Accreditation™ Program Keeps Hospital Ready for Scheduled or Unannounced Surveys

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Methodist Charlton Medical Center is a modern teaching and full-service general acute care community hospital that has been serving southwest Dallas since 1975. Over the last several years, Methodist Charlton has added a $116 million expansion project, which includes a new 180-bed patient tower, a new physician office building and parking garage, completed a new Post Coronary Intervention Unit (PCIU), and renovated the Cardiac Catheterization Labs and MRI Suites. They are proud to offer the latest in medical technology and innovative treatments and continue to make major enhancements across the campus. Methodist Charlton was named one of the nation’s top performers on key quality measures by The Joint Commission (TJC), the leading accreditor of health care organizations in America.

Client Objectives

There are many pitfalls to accreditation compliance for TJC, as well as other accrediting agencies; not only with the performance of the tests, but also with the documentation of that performance. It is critical for hospital facility directors to be familiar with the federal, state, and local regulatory codes and standards and knowledgeable about their interpretation to avoid such situations. With over 12 years of serving in facility operations and regulatory roles at the hospital, Michael Lowe, Director of Engineering at Methodist Charlton Medical Center, knew he could improve upon his already solid accreditation program. When Mike took over, he found the testing, inspection, and maintenance documentation on the fire safety systems to be complete, but not so easily read; he brought in his Siemens Sales Account Representative, Tracey Uster-Narveson, for a second opinion. Mike and Tracey worked together to create a program that would meet the specific needs of Methodist Charlton. When a new Siemens fire alarm system was installed in 2007, Mike wanted to ensure each device was tested, correctly labeled, itemized according to its location, and documented in a binder specific to TJC standards. This is an ongoing process at a hospital that continues to evolve to meet the needs of the community.

Siemens Solution

Siemens provides total building solutions for all fire alarm, life safety, and security needs tailored to a customer’s specific application, requirements, and budget. The solution designed for Methodist Charlton includes a Fire & Life Safety management program as well as a Healthcare Accreditation program specific to TJC.

The Siemens Fire & Life Safety service program designed for Methodist ensures testing, inspections, and preventative maintenance are performed on schedule and provides coverage when equipment failures happen. The Program provides the peace-of-mind that a Siemens technician is on call 24/7 to help test or troubleshoot.

The Siemens Fire Services for Healthcare Accreditation Program helps Methodist Charlton organize, manage, and track reporting requirements for TJC healthcare accreditation programs. It includes a comprehensive documentation management system to ensure that all fire and life safety documentation is properly completed, organized, and easily accessible. Tracey and the Siemens team helped ensure all of the necessary reporting requirements – including National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards, local fire codes, and State and Federal healthcare accreditation standards for Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) — were
tested, documented, and organized. A Siemens Joint Commission binder in each building contains the fire and life safety system’s test reports that are standardized and customized to meet TJC’s documentation requirement of EC.02.03.05-EP25. The binder also contains the annual delivery schedule, work orders, and any other related documentation. This has proven to be an important and effective documentation system during internal hospital “mock-surveys,” required Periodic Performance Reviews (PPRs), and TJC document review surveys.

“With Siemens’ expertise, we were able to clearly see what we were missing and how Siemens could make it better,” said Mike. Leonard Stewart, Supervisor of Operations Service for Siemens, conducted a complete fire and life safety document survey, delving into TJC and NFPA requirements. Mike and Leonard then reviewed the recommendations to determine whether or not those changes needed to be made. For the fire systems alone, Leonard made 40 different recommendations. “Not everyone understands Joint Commission requirements, especially all of the Elements of Performance. Siemens knows everything about this side of The Joint Commission. It’s unusual for a service provider to have the acumen of both NFPA and The Joint Commission,” stated Mike. To continue to meet high expectation levels, Leonard and Mike hold regular Joint Commission Compliance Review Meetings.

Client Results
Whether it is TJC, NFPA, or a local surveyor making a surprise visit, the systematic organization of testing documentation and binders put together by Siemens have created a very stable platform at Methodist Charlton.

“Siemens has set the expectation where any surveyor that comes in will see the same documents, all presented in a standardized and organized manner. We make it easy for the surveyor to ascertain within the first 10 minutes that we are on top of our testing and maintenance with a well organized and thorough binder. This sets a great tempo for the day,” noted Mike.

Siemens service also includes immediately addressing any gap of concern that is discovered during testing. Siemens technicians communicate and address any issues of non-compliance that may impact patient safety and care by end-of-day, as well as file any necessary documents and reports in the binder.

The hospital is able to realize all of the benefits the Siemens service team provides:
• **Compliance** – keeping a priority focus on fire & life safety and the impact it has on patient safety and care.
• **Organization** – implementing a proven scheduling and documentation system.
• **Testing** – understanding life safety systems and applying the NFPA standards while performing the required task.
• **Acumen** – remaining versed in the healthcare accreditation process and requirements.