

Joint Commission Online Article

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Compliance tips for most scored Life Safety requirements

The Joint Commission has compiled tips to help hospitals that may be struggling with certain elements of performance (EP) in the following Life Safety (LS) chapter and related National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) *Life Safety* requirements:

- LS.02.01.20, EP 32
 - For existing buildings, the *Life Safety Code* requires that doors to sleeping rooms, egress doors, and doors to diagnostic and treatment areas have a clear (unobstructed) width of at least 32 inches (see NFPA 101-2000, 19.2.3.5). Doors in newly constructed buildings must have a minimum clear width of 41 ½ inches (see 18.2.3.5).
- LS.02.01.30, EP 25
 - Smoke barrier doors are not required to swing in the direction of egress; however, they must be either of substantial construction (for example, 1 ¾ inches thick, solid-bonded wood core) or of construction that resists fire for at least 20 minutes. In existing buildings, these doors may swing the same direction and must measure 32 inches clear width. In new construction, swinging doors must swing in different directions and must also measure 32 inches clear width. Newly constructed doors also require door edge treatments (such as rabbets, bevels, or astragals) at the meeting edges of the doors.
- LS.02.01.34, EP 4
 - An organization's fire alarm system must be activated by a manual fire alarm (such as a fire alarm pull box), automatic detection device, or extinguishing system. Fire alarm pull boxes must be unobstructed, visible, and located at the nurses' station, or placed in a natural exit access path. Travel distance to the fire alarm must not exceed 200 feet.
- LS.02.01.35, EP 14
 - Organizations that are required to have an automatic sprinkler system must have an adequate and reliable water supply to feed the system. Standard EC.02.03.05, EP 11 requires systems with fire pumps to be tested annually to ensure that there is adequate flow to the pumps.
- LS.02.01.70, EP 4
 - The Life Safety Code requires that "No Smoking" signs either be prominently displayed at all major entrances, or in any room, ward, or compartment where flammable liquids, combustible gases, or oxygen are used or stored, and in any other hazardous location (see 18/19.7.4). All areas where smoking is allowed must have noncombustible ashtrays and metal containers with self-closing cover devices into which ashtrays can be emptied.
 - All draperies, curtains, and other loosely hanging fabrics must meet flame resistance ratings in accordance with NFPA 701: *Standard Methods of Fire Tests for Flame Propagation of Textiles and Films*. The Joint Commission also recognizes California Technical Bulletin 133: *Flammability Test Procedure for Seating Furniture for Use in Public Occupancies*, and California Technical Bulletin 117: *Requirements, Test Procedure and Apparatus for Testing the Flame Retardance of Resilient Filling Materials Used in Upholstered Furniture*.



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- LS.02.01.35,EP 6
 - Per NFPA 13, cubicle curtains must not compromise the 18-inch space below the sprinkler. A cubicle curtain with a mesh top (½-inch diagonal or a 70 percent open weave) that extends 18 inches below the sprinkler is acceptable.

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