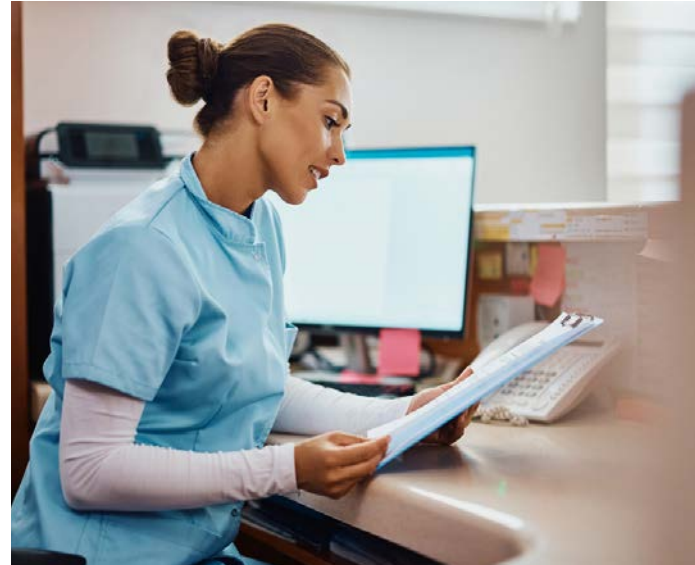


Tips for Writing Infection Control Policies and Procedures (P&Ps)

Focal Problem or Issue

Policies serve as a functional framework for providers, which state the intentions to guide decision-making that guides resident care. Procedures outline the steps staff should follow to implement the policy. Policies and procedures should be written so that staff can get the information needed to do the job they are assigned to do.



It is important to keep in mind that not everything requires a policy. Standards of care such as peri-care, transfers, assisting with meals, etc., do not require a policy, they require staff competency, which would be offered during orientation and as needed.

Suggested Tips for Policy Writing

TIP: Before deciding that a policy or procedure is needed, be sure you have identified and articulated the problem you want policies and procedures to solve and that a solution exists to solve the problem. Refrain from writing a policy or procedure ‘just because’ or as a knee jerk reaction to a new citation.

TIP: Use caution in writing a system-wide policy that may not apply to certain areas of the organization, types of residents, or clinical situations. System-wide policies should acknowledge or reference department specific policies or unique populations or situations.

TIP: Policies need to be concise, consistent, and easy to read. By using clear and simple language increases the probability that the policy will be understood and followed.

TIP: Keep sentences brief. Longer sentences may make the meaning difficult to follow.

TIP: Policies and procedures should be personalized to the individual facility, not a mere copy of a pre-made manual. When the surveyor arrives, and staff are asked about the policy, it is important that they are aware of what is written. Therefore, it's important to educate staff about policies and procedures, periodically audit their compliance and be sure they can answer questions about its location if surveyors ask.

TIP: Policies and procedures should be written using a standardized writing format or style, so that staff members looking up any policy will know what section they need to go to for the right information.

TIP: Policies and procedures should be compared to the regulatory language and should not go beyond the regulatory language unless it is clinically important for your unique population or situation. For example, a facility may need to put a policy in place to be compliant with their state or county regulation.

TIP: Refrain from using absolute terms in policies and procedures unless absolutely necessary — allow for flexibility. For example, “prevent” or “avoid” are terms that indicate the “outcome” is “will not happen”.

- Avoid absolute language in goals such as infection prevention. If you fail to prevent it, even if you follow all the steps in the procedure, you have not followed the policy to prevent infections.
- Rather use terms like “to reduce the chance/risk of” which allows for the unwanted event to happen despite following all the steps in the policy and procedure.

TIP: Policies and procedures should be reviewed at least annually and as needed. They should align with what is reflected in your facility risk assessment.

Providers may think they are compliant with regulatory requirements because they have a policy or procedure that is appropriately titled after the name of the regulation or standard they represent. For example, having a policy or procedure titled Hand Hygiene is a starting point. However, ask yourself, has the content been written by an Infection Preventionist? By someone who is an expert on the subject? It is important to note that one policy does not necessarily fit all. The policy should incorporate how the process is practiced in the facility and in a standardized format so that staff can quickly scroll through it to find the information they need.

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