



10 Most Common Hospital Violations

From Fire Code Inspections Conducted By

The Washington Office of the State Fire Marshal

Data compiled from January 1 through December 31, 2010

1. Electrical Wiring and Equipment, K-Tag 147 – “Electrical wiring and equipment shall be in accordance with NFPA70, National Electrical Code 9.1.2”

Problem	How to Avoid or Address the Problem
Misuse of extension cords (i.e., using extension cords in place of permanent wiring).	Remove extension cord, plug electrical appliances directly into wall outlet.
Daisy chains or piggy-backed power cords.	Each power cord must go directly into the wall outlet.
Obstructed electrical panels.	Remove items blocking electrical panel.
Mislabeled or unlabeled electrical circuit boxes.	Apply proper labeling to electrical circuit boxes.
Outlets that were not GFI-approved.	Replace outlet with a GFI-approved outlet.
Portable heaters without tip-over switches.	Replace with approved heater with tip-over switch.
Open junction boxes.	All junction boxes shall be provided with covers.

2. Doors, K-Tag 18 – “Doors protecting corridor openings in other than required enclosures of vertical openings, exits, or hazardous areas shall be substantial doors, such as those constructed of 1 ¾ inch solid-bonded core wood or capable of resisting fire for at least 20 minutes. Doors in sprinklered buildings are only required to resist the passage of smoke. There is no impediment to the closing of the doors. Doors shall be provided with a means suitable for keeping the door closed. Dutch doors meeting *19.3.6.3.6 are permitted. *19.3.6.3 Roller latches are prohibited by Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) regulations in all health care facilities.” * NFPA 101, 2000 ed.

Problem	How to Avoid or Address the Problem
Doors that did not close and/or latch properly.	Maintain doors, on an ongoing basis, to operate properly.
Doors purposely blocked from closing with wedges and/or doorstops.	Remove wedges and doorstops from the area.
Penetrations in the door compromising the smoke resistance of the door.	Penetration shall be filled with a material that is capable of limiting the transfer of smoke or an approved device that is designed for that specific purpose.



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- 3. **Means of Egress, K-Tag 72** – “Means of Egress shall be continuously maintained free of all obstructions or impediments to full instant use in the case of fire or other emergency. No furnishings, decorations, or other objects shall obstruct exits, access thereto, egress there from, or visibility thereof shall be in accordance with NFPA 101, 2000 ed. 7.1.10.”

Problem	How to Avoid or Address the Problem
Obstruction violations involving equipment and carts, furniture, and storage issues.	Remove all obstructions from means of egress.
Not exiting to an all-weather surface.	The slip-resistant surface of an exterior exit discharge walkway constructed to retain adequate firmness to prevent excessive resistance to the rolling capabilities of wheelchairs, beds, and walkers in all foreseeable weather conditions.

- 4. **Sprinkler System – Installation and Maintenance, K-Tag 56** – “If there is an automatic sprinkler system it shall be installed in accordance with NFPA 13, Standard for the Installation of Sprinkler Systems, by an approved contractor to provide complete coverage for all portions of the building. If partial system, indicate location of sprinklers. The systems shall be properly maintained in accordance with NFPA 25, Standard for the Inspection, Testing, and Maintenance of Water-Based Fire Protection Systems. It shall be fully supervised. There shall be a reliable, adequate water supply for the system. Required sprinkler systems are equipped with water flow and tamper switches, which are electrically connected to the building fire alarm system. From NFPA 101, 2000 ed. 19.3.5”

Problem	How to Avoid or Address the Problem
Areas that had no or insufficient sprinkler protection.	Contact a fire sprinkler contractor.
Missing sprinkler heads.	Replace missing sprinkler heads.
Obstructed sprinkler heads or sprinkler pattern.	Remove any items that are obstructing a sprinkler head or its spray pattern.
Damaged or otherwise compromised sprinkler heads.	Replace any damaged or compromised sprinkler heads.

- 5. **Anesthetizing Locations, K-78** – “Anesthetizing locations shall be protected in accordance with NFPA 99, Standard for Health Care Facilities.
 - a. Shutoff valves are located outside each anesthetizing location and arranged so that shutting off one room or location will not affect others.
 - b. **Relative humidity** is maintained equal to or greater than 35%.
NFPA 99 4.3.1.2.3(n) and 5.4.1.1, 18.3.2.3, 19.3.2.3”

Problem	How to Avoid or Address the Problem
Maintaining relative humidity in anesthetizing locations equal to or great than 35%.	Each citation for relative humidity is given individual consideration.



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- 6. Fire Drills, K-Tag 50** – “Fire drills are held at unexpected times under varying conditions, at least quarterly on each shift. The staff is familiar with procedures and is aware that drills are part of established routine. Responsibility for planning and conducting drills is assigned only to competent persons who are qualified to exercise leadership. Where drills are conducted between 9:00 PM and 6:00 AM, a coded announcement may be used instead of audible alarms. NFPA 101, 2000 ed., 18.7.1.2, 19.7.1.2”

Problem	How to Avoid or Address the Problem
Fire drills not being held regularly.	Fire drills are to be held at unexpected times under varying conditions, at least quarterly on each shift.
Not keeping a record of the fire drill.	A record of all fire drills must be maintained and made available upon request.

- 7. Cooking Facilities, K-Tag 69** – “Cooking facilities shall be protected in accordance with NFPA 101, 2000 ed., 9.2.3. 18.3.2.6, 19.3.2.6, NFPA 96”

Problem	How to Avoid or Address the Problem
Cooking facilities did not have proper protection. Commercial kitchens that do a variety of cooking with broilers and deep fat fryers need to have extinguishing systems that are adequate to protect the cooking surfaces.	Contact a system provider for the type of system installed or needed.

- 8. Type of Construction, K-Tag 12** – “Building construction type and height meets one of the following from NFPA 101, 2000 ed. 18.1.6.2, 18, 18.1.6.3, 18.2.5.1”

Problem	How to Avoid or Address the Problem
Existing construction does not meet with the fire protection system provided. This is especially common if exceptions were given at the time of construction and there is no longer a record available as to why that decision was made.	To avoid this problem, maintain building plans and all records pertaining thereto, including any exemptions and additions or remodels. Contact Department of Health Construction Review.



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9. Fire Sprinkler System – Testing, Inspection and Maintenance, K-Tag 62 – “Required automatic sprinkler systems are continuously maintained in reliable operating condition and are inspected and tested periodically. NFPA 101, 2000 ed. 18.7.6, 19.7.6,4.6.12, NFPA 13, NFPA 25, 9.7.5”

Problem	How to Avoid or Address the Problem
Missing escutcheon plates/escutcheon rings.	Replace missing escutcheon plates and rings.
Painted sprinkler heads.	Replace painted sprinkler heads.
Obstructed sprinkler heads.	Remove the obstruction or contact a fire sprinkler contractor for recommendations.
Areas with no sprinkler protection.	Contact a fire sprinkler contractor.
Overdue tests/inspections.	Ensure inspection and testing of the fire sprinkler system is completed on time and a record is kept and made available upon inspection.

10. Smoke Compartmentation and Control, K-27 – “Door openings in smoke barriers have at least a 20 minute fire protection rating or are at least 1 3/4 inch thick solid bonded core wood. Non-rated protective plates that do not exceed 48 inches from the bottom of the door are permitted. Horizontal sliding doors comply with NFPA 101, 2000 ed., 7.2.1.14. Doors shall be self-closing or automatic-closing in accordance with 19.2.2.2.6. Swinging doors are not required to swing with egress and positive latching is not required. NFPA 101, 2000 ed. 19.3.7.5, 19.3.7.6, 19.3.7.7, 18.3.7.5, 18.3.7.6, 18.3.7.8

Problem	How to Avoid or Address the Problem
Smoke compartment fire doors that did not close and/or latch properly.	Maintain doors, on an ongoing basis, to operate properly.
Doors purposely blocked from closing with wedges and/or doorstops.	Remove wedges and doorstops from the area.
Penetrations in the door, compromising the smoke-resistance of the door.	Penetrations shall be filled with a material that is capable of limiting the transfer of smoke or an approved device that is designed for that specific purpose.

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The role of staff in reporting deficiencies through their chain of command, such as an exit light out, a door not closing properly, or even being due for a fire drill cannot be over-emphasized.

Reporting deficiencies right away allows for quicker repairs and makes the building safer for staff, clients, and guests.