

# Adherence to Joint Commission Standards



## THE MYTH

The Joint Commission standards are the only standards to which The Joint Commission holds accredited health care organizations accountable.

## DEBUNKING THE MYTH

The Joint Commission evaluates health care organizations' compliance with The Joint Commission standards. However, The Joint Commission also evaluates health care organizations' compliance with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Conditions of Participation and other applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations. Additionally, The Joint Commission evaluates organizations' adherence to their own internal organizational policies and procedures developed and implemented to meet regulatory standards.<sup>1,2</sup>

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Joint Commission also holds organizations accountable to manufacturer's instructions of use and evidence-based performance standards chosen by the organization, which are intended to improve quality and safety. It is left to the discretion of individual organizations to establish policies to meet Joint Commission standards and other requirements. The Joint Commission then holds organizations accountable to following their own policies.<sup>1</sup>

Over-interpretation or misinterpretation of required standards for Joint Commission accreditation may lead to overly strict policies, unnecessary tasks, and inefficient processes. Health care organizations may establish internal requirements well beyond Joint Commission standards. When health care organizations fall short of these more stringent, self-imposed policies and procedures, they risk being surveyed by The Joint Commission as out of compliance.

“ Organizations frequently establish stringent requirements well beyond our standards, and they then get scored as being out of compliance. We get blamed for this, and that's how myths arise that we require things when we do not! ”

–David Baker, MD, MACP  
Executive Vice President, Healthcare Quality  
Evaluation and Improvement  
The Joint Commission

## AMA policy

- [Activities of The Joint Commission H-220.939](#)

## Resources

- The Joint Commission Accreditation Process Overview [Fact Sheet](#)

## References

1. The Joint Commission. Learn the Accreditation Process. The Joint Commission. Published 2023. Accessed November 10, 2023. <https://www.jointcommission.org/what-we-offer/accreditation/become-accredited/learn-the-process/>
2. The Joint Commission. Accreditation Process Overview Fact Sheet. The Joint Commission. Published 2023. Accessed November 10, 2023. <https://www.jointcommission.org/resources/news-and-multimedia/fact-sheets/facts-about-accreditation-process-overview/>