

# THE ADVISOR

MONTHLY COMPLIANCE COMMUNICATOR

## Keeping Your Facility Safe

Total Medical Compliance has always been a company that focuses on the safety of workers and patients. Over the past several months, we have been in partnership with [Jerry McCormick](#), President of Personal Safety at Work, who has educated both clients and our TMC team members on another aspect of safety: facility safety. His vast knowledge of simple measures that can reduce the risk of workplace violence has been most appreciated, but also very timely.

Workplace violence is defined by the [National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health \(NIOSH\)](#) as “violent acts, including physical assaults and threats of assault, directed toward persons at work or on duty.” Enforcement action is taken when the assault is physical, but verbal violence can cause trauma and stress as well that can impact the employees’ well-being

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# WORKPLACE SAFETY

Violence can be initiated through many different pathways:

- Domestic violence spilling into the workplace,
- Disgruntled patient or family members,
- Individuals seeking narcotics,
- Co-worker disagreement, and
- Robbery.



According to a report from the [Bureau of Labor and Statistics](#) data revealed that in 2018, health care and social service workers were five times more likely to experience workplace violence than all other workers, comprising 73% of all nonfatal workplace injuries and illnesses requiring days away from work.

In the second of Mr. McCormick's Workplace Violence Series, he will review the crime fighting tool, [Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design](#), or CPTED. This tool encourages the use of certain best practices or systems in your facility to create a workplace that feels and is safer for everyone that enters.

During the process of preparing for this second webinar, five different healthcare practices were assessed and very simple recommendations were made to raise the level of awareness of all workers and decrease the likelihood of violence. The webinar session will cover the top 10 actions which can immediately impact the safety of your workplace. Because the holiday season can add additional stress to everyone, we wanted to share a few safety measures now.

[Register for this webinar here!](#)

# WORKPLACE SAFETY

1. The reception area should have glass or plexiglass across the entire counter space that is affixed to the wall. There should be a 4-to-12-inch space at the top of the covering to allow airflow from the HVAC system to operate. Ensure there is a small opening (either along the entire bottom of the reception area about 2 inches in height or cutouts at each receptionist desk) that will allow for exchange of papers with patients.
2. Access to the clinical areas should always be secured in some manner. This may include a passcode or scanning of a badge, or the entry door is locked and must be opened by authorized personnel only. This layer of protection controls access to all staff when the front desk is secured.
3. A back entrance to the facility/practice should always remained locked. For most businesses, this entry is not monitored, making it imperative to have some control of who enters the building.

Mr. McCormick will include many more safety recommendations in the second part of the [webinar](#) series which will be relatively straightforward to implement. Small changes can drastically reduce the risk of workplace violence and create a safe place for workers and for patients to receive care.



## Extension Cord Safety

The holidays and colder weather are here, and with that comes the increased use of extension cords. These can be used for connecting holiday decorations, lights, small devices, etc. to an electrical source. Extension cords are helpful tools that provide additional outlet space and power for devices or appliances.

Caution should be taken when utilizing these useful pieces of equipment. When used improperly, extension cords can present many risks, including fire, shock, and tripping hazards.

All extension cords are not created equally. It is important to only use extension cords that are tested at a reputable laboratory, such as [Intertek](#) (ETL) or [Underwriters Laboratories](#) (UL). The lab information can typically be found on the product's packaging or the label on the cord. If you are unable to find the laboratory information in either of these locations, it would be beneficial to select a different brand of extension cord.

Here are some additional considerations to think about when it comes to the extension cord you're using:

- whether it's suitable for outdoor vs. indoor use
- cord length
- cord gauge or thickness
- cord wattage
- presence of grounding pin

All this information can be found on the cord's packaging. An indoor/outdoor use cord can be determined by the letters "W" and "S," where the "W" represents an outdoor-use cord and "S" represents an indoor-use cord. This distinction is because outdoor cords are wet-rated with protective insulation.

## *Cord Labels*

**W: outdoor-use cord**

**S: indoor-use cord**

Cord length is often overlooked, and many are unaware that the shorter the cord, the more electrical current the cord is capable of sustaining. Knowing the wattage of the device you intend to plug in is helpful in the selection of the appropriate extension cord length.

Additionally, the extension cord's gauge, or thickness, is in direct relation to the power output. The thicker the cord, the more amps the cord can manage.

An important safety feature that all extension cords should have is a grounding pin, or a third prong on the plug. If your extension cord does not have one, remove the cord from use. Never remove the grounding pin from a cord. Grounding pins help reduce potential electrical exposures if there are failures with internal wiring or a short circuit. It provides an emergency path for electrical current to travel.

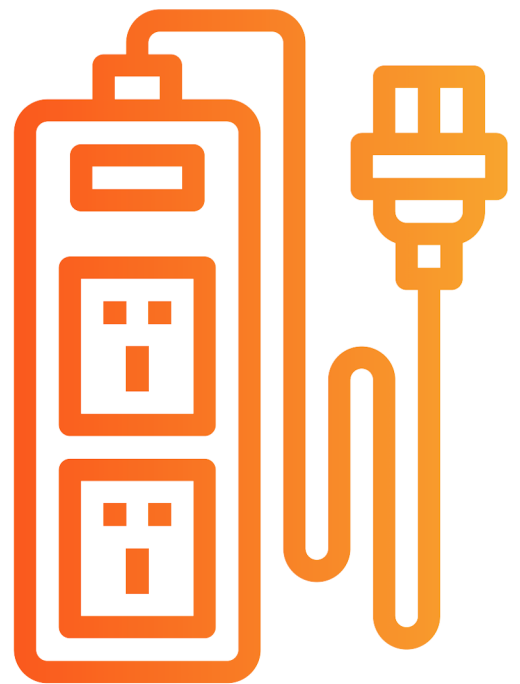
Other safety considerations are:

- Throw away any frayed extension cord immediately.
- Do not plug extension cords into one another, or an extension cord train.
- Do not tape or staple extension cords to the floor or other surfaces.
- Do not place extension cords under rugs or furniture.
- If an extension cord feels hot to the touch, remove it from use immediately.

On another note, it is critical to never plug space heaters into an extension cord. Space heaters should always be plugged into a wall outlet. Using an extension cord for space heaters can cause the cord to overheat, resulting in a fire. Additionally, when a space heater is plugged into an outlet, do not plug any more devices into the same outlet. This can also cause a fire from the outlet overloading.

Extension cords are very helpful tools but must be used with caution. If safety measures are followed and respected, extension cords can be a useful tool to power necessary equipment and temporary devices.

Read all the manufacturers' recommendations to select the appropriate cord for your needs and, above all, stay safe this holiday season!



## Extension Cord Safety Tips

Roughly **3,300 home fires** originate in extension cords each year. Extension cords can overheat and cause fires when used improperly, so **keep these important tips in mind** to protect your home and loved ones.



Never plug an extension cord into **another extension cord**.



Make sure extension cords are **properly rated for their intended use**, indoor or outdoor. Never use an indoor extension cord outdoors.

### Extension Cord Designations

S: Designed for General Use

W: Rated for Outdoor Use

J: Standard 300 Voltage Insulation

T: Made from Vinyl Thermoplastic

P: Parallel Wire Construction  
(Air Conditioner Cards and Household Extension Cords)

O: Oil-Resistant

E: Made from TPE

SJTW

SJTW



Never use three-prong plugs with outlets that only have two slots. Never cut off the ground pin to force a fit, which could lead to electric shock.



Only use extension cords that have been approved by an independent testing laboratory, such as the ones listed above.

### Cord Length and Amperage Limits

**25 – 50** Feet Extension Cords

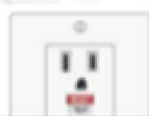
16 Gauge (1–13 Amps)  
14 Gauge (14–15 Amps)  
12–10 Gauge (16–20 Amps)

**100** Feet Extension Cords

16 Gauge (1–10 Amps)  
14 Gauge (11–13 Amps)  
12 Gauge (14–15 Amps)  
10 Gauge (16–20 Amps)

**150** Feet Extension Cords

14 Gauge (1–7 Amps)  
12 Gauge (8–10 Amps)  
10 Gauge (11–15 Amps)



Always use **GFCI protection** when using an extension cord outdoors.



Inspect cords for damage before use. Check for cracked or frayed sockets, loose or bare wires, and loose connections. Discard damaged extension cords.

⚠ Extension cords are for **temporary use only**. A heavy reliance on extension cords is an indication that you have **too few outlets** to address your needs. Have **additional outlets installed** where you need them.

# WEBINARS

## Upcoming Webinars With TMC

### [Workplace Violence Series, Part II: Keeping Your Facility Safe](#)

Presented by Jerry McCormick, President of Personal Safety at Work

- Date: December 14th
- Time: 12:00 to 1:30PM EST
- Price: \$49 per person

This webinar will blend a better understanding of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles to look at your own environment to make changes to enhance safety and review 5 case studies of medical practices that highlight different risk profiles.

### [NC Infection Control Curriculum for Outpatient Settings](#)

Presented by Karen Gregory, RN, CDIPC

- Dates: January 4 + 11, 2023
- Time: 9:00am – 12:00pm EST
- Price: \$240/person
- TMC Clients Price: \$175/person

**Pricing includes both sessions**

Practical solutions to your infection control challenges will be provided as basic principles of epidemiology, disinfection, sterilization, and techniques to reduce the spread of infection are reviewed.

### [NC Infection Control Curriculum for Dental Settings \(SPICE\)](#)

Presented by Karen Gregory, RN, CDIPC

Dates: January 10 + 17, 2023

Time: 9:00am – 12:00pm EST

- Price: \$240/person
- TMC Clients Price: \$175/person

**Pricing includes both sessions**

Practical solutions to your infection control challenges will be provided as basic principles of epidemiology, disinfection, sterilization, and techniques to reduce the spread of infection are reviewed.

[More info about past webinars here.](#)



# SECURITY SCOUT

## Be on the Lookout for Holiday Masqueraders!

The holidays and end of the year rush makes you more likely to fall victim to a phishing scam and the bad guys know that. What to look out for at work and at home to keep safe.

The most common type of phishing emails seen around this time of year are fake invoices and purchase orders. Similar to other phishing emails, it will use the company's logo and appear to use its real website, but if you look closely and hover over links and the sender's email address, you will see it is fake.

The screenshot shows an email interface. At the top, the sender is listed as 'Starbucks <esu@angliss.edu.au>' with a red box around the address. A blue warning box says 'Not from Starbucks...'. The email body features a Starbucks logo and a red coffee cup. A yellow 'Learn more' button is present. Below the image, the text reads: 'Here's your chance to receive a special gift only for you. Complete the short survey about your experiences at Starbucks to select your exclusive offer of up to \$100.00 cash value.' A green 'Enter Survey' button is shown. A long, complex URL is provided at the bottom. Two blue callout boxes with white text provide annotations: one points to the 'Enter Survey' button saying 'The entire email is a link, not just the "Enter Survey" button.', and another points to the URL saying 'This isn't the Starbucks website...'. The email footer includes 'Reply', 'Reply all', and 'Forward' buttons.

A common example is using a different type of font or display for the link:

Real Site

[www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org)

Fake Site

[www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org)

# SECURITY SCOUT

Another example is using a shortened URL to try to hide where the link will take you: <https://tinyurl.com/yatrukrrh>

You can check a shortened URL to see if it is safe using one of these websites:

- [www.getlinkinfo.com](http://www.getlinkinfo.com)
- [www.unshorten.it](http://www.unshorten.it)
- [www.urlxray.com](http://www.urlxray.com)

The email may have a sense of urgency which will make it more likely for you to act without verifying its authenticity.

It might ask you to download an invoice attached to the email or click a link to enter payment information or a username and password to an online account. All of these are set up to steal your business/personal information and/or infect your system with malware.

Other topics to look for are sudden password change requirements, sales, discounts, or offers that are too good to be true or that you must act quickly to take advantage of, suspicious account activity notifications, and identification confirmations that you have not just initiated (e.g., like a code you receive to confirm logging into your bank account or EHR).

## IT'S YOUR CALL

**OSHA:** How many exit routes are necessary in the workplace?

**HIPAA:** **True or False:** There is no way to check whether a link to a website in an email goes where it says it will go.

THE ANSWERS?  
CLICK HERE!



[View our past 'It's Your Call' articles here](#)

# THE ADVISOR

MONTHLY COMPLIANCE COMMUNICATOR

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## Instructions

Print and post newsletter in office for staff review. Each member should sign this form when completed. Keep on file as proof of training on these topics.

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Need to contact us? Scan the QR code for all the ways to get in touch!