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New HIPAA Audit Protocol

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In late March or early April 2016, the Department of Health and Human Services' Office for Civil Rights, without much fanfare, posted an updated audit protocol. A PDF version of the document is 212 pages long. The format and content differs significantly from the prior version, and contains additional detail for certain criteria. For example, the old protocol required auditors to "[o]btain and review documentation of how the covered entity has verified the identity of several recent requestors of PHI."

The new protocol has language that is not limited to covered entities, and it requires auditors to "[o]btain and review sample documentation, consistent with the established performance criterion, of how the covered entity has verified the identity of several recent requestors of PHI." The protocol lists documents that may satisfy the criterion, including "a copy of or notification of the official credentials, a completed verification checklist, a copy of the request on official letterhead, etc." The protocol appears to be a very useful tool that covered entities and business associates could use to assess their level of HIPAA compliance.



[Click This Link to Access New Audit Protocol](#)

Keeping surfaces clean in hospitals: an author Q+A

Antimicrobial Resistance and Infection Control (ARIC) has today published a review looking at the best ways in which to keep surfaces clean in hospitals. To

tell us more, co-author Dr John Boyce answers our questions about the work.

Because many factors make it difficult to keep surfaces that are touched by patients and healthcare personnel clean and free of pathogens, there is increasing interest in newer approaches and technologies that can supplement routine housekeeping protocols. In the last ten years, multiple studies have provided increasing evidence that contaminated surfaces in hospitals can contribute to the spread of bacteria that can cause hospital-acquired infections.



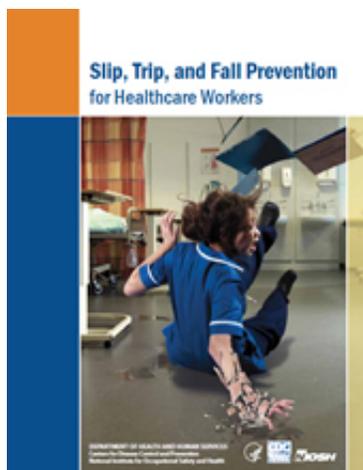
The present review was designed to summarize new disinfectant products that are available for use in healthcare facilities, methods for applying disinfectants to surfaces, and new approaches to monitor how well surfaces are cleaned and disinfected. New 'no-touch' technologies that can be used to supplement standard cleaning and disinfection practices are also reviewed.

[Link to the Full Report!](#)

New Slip, Trip and Fall Prevention Standards Certain to Be a Game Changer

The healthcare industry's slip, trip and fall problem

In 2002, the healthcare industry was ranked first with the greatest number of total injuries (more than 296,000) in the United States. In addition to the large workforce and the large number of injuries generated, the healthcare industry also has a much higher-than-average rate of slips, trips and falls on the same level.



Slips, trips and falls due to liquid contamination (water, fluid, and slippery, greasy and slick spots) were the most common cause (24 percent) of claims for the entire study period, 1996-2005. Food service, transport and emergency medical service, and housekeeping staff were at the highest risk of slip, trip and fall claims in the healthcare industry, while nursing and office administrative staff generated the largest numbers of slip, trip and fall claims.

A series of new walkway safety standards have emerged and are certain to change the way slip-and-fall lawsuits are litigated.

[See Complete Article!](#)



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