



Building Construction Profiles in TIER® Workflow®

Leonard J. Brink, MSW, ACSW
CEO

Discussion

The Environmental Management module of TIER® Workflow enables organizations to compile basic building construction profiles for each building that it owns or operates. This module enables the compilation of a profile “record” for each building much like a clinical record for each client. Essential information included with each profile is: primary occupancy classification; building characteristics; and life safety features. The Building Profile tab of the Environmental Management Module face sheet is described below:

A screenshot of the 'Building Facesheet' software interface. The window title is 'Building Facesheet'. At the top, there are 'Options' and standard window controls. Below this is a yellow header area with input fields for 'Name', 'Address', 'Address2', 'Building ID', 'City', 'State', 'Zipcode', 'Phone', and 'Fax', along with 'Save' and 'Cancel' buttons. A tabbed interface below shows the 'Profile' tab selected. The 'Primary Occupancy Classification' section includes a dropdown for 'Occupancy Type', radio buttons for 'Existing' and 'New' classification, and a 'Building in Use' checkbox. The 'Building Characteristics' section has a 'Building Type' dropdown, 'Number of Stories', 'Year Built', 'Square Footage', and 'Occupied by organization' checkbox. The 'Life Safety Features' section includes checkboxes for 'Fire Alarm System?', 'Smoke Detection System?', 'Approved Automatic Sprinkler System?', and 'Direct Alarm Connection?'. Each of these has associated radio buttons for 'Yes' and 'No'. Additionally, there are radio buttons for 'Throughout the building' and 'In limited areas' for the systems, and radio buttons for 'Fire Department', 'Central Station', and 'Central Receiving Authority' for the alarm connection. A checkbox 'Is Default Building used for Billing?' is also present.

The profile can be expanded to include more specific basic building identification information such as the complete Statement of Condition information required by JCAHO. In addition, building profiles can be updated over time to comply with updates of the NFPA No. 101, Life Safety Code requirements. The construction profile for each building is a basis for determining necessary and appropriate life safety plan requirements for the building, including designated means of egress, exit signage, corridor lighting, and building evacuation plans.

Another advantage of compiling a profile information database on each building is that a comprehensive “facilities management program” can be more easily established and implemented to address the array of preventive and ongoing maintenance needs for each building. An effective and efficient facilities management program is a significant risk management resource that may also result in reduction of casualty loss insurance rates for the organization.

Note that the above face sheet identifies other operational components of facilities and environmental management for each building. These components are the basis for compliance with JCAHO, CARF and COA environmental management and life safety standards. Sample plan outlines are included in the TIER[®] Workflow System Manual to assist organizations with development of their environmental management plans. The outlines can be condensed or expanded to fit the scope of environmental management planning required by the organization. Such planning is important in that the focus of facilities and environmental management processes should be both organization-wide and building specific.

A number of drill downs and reports are included with the EM module in order to summarize outcomes, analyze environmental management patterns and trends, and target actual or potential risk factors related to patient safety. The reports integrate operational information and findings from all buildings to provide a comprehensive environmental management performance picture for the entire organization.

This information will prove to be particularly relevant and useful to comply with the impending new JCAHO “Patient Safety Program” standards. Use of the EM and other three modules of TIER[®] Workflow will facilitate development of a comprehensive patient safety program to address the new standards. Once the final standards are published, Sequest will prepare a specific information mailer on Patient Safety. We anticipate that the new standards can be primarily addressed through drill downs and reports rather than changes in policies and procedures or patient safety-related practices currently provided by most organizations. However, a comprehensive program approach, guided by a Patient Safety Program plan, will be required in order to ensure that patient safety is an integrated and coordinated process. Leadership commitment to this approach will need to be clearly demonstrated.

Conclusion

Sequest is committed to providing our clients with resources in TIER[®] to support a comprehensive environmental management program while also complying with regulatory and accreditation standards. The EM module is a powerful tool that enables organizations to completely automate their environmental management programs.