

# Ligature Risk Compliance Goes Beyond Identifying



It's not enough to simply recognize ligature risks in health care facilities. Creating a safe environment for all requires performing an assessment, establishing a plan, and then following through. Recent reports of patient suicide among the top three sentinel events – at a rate of 85 deaths per year – have encouraged regulators to turn a keen eye toward potential hanging or choking points. However, during a survey, facilities must demonstrate more than just awareness. Strategies must be in place; staff must be trained; and every effort must be made to adjust, replace, and repair areas of risk as needed.

Also of note: EC.02.06.01, one of the most stringent standards set by The Joint Commission, applies to any setting that specifically is designated to treat psychiatric and behavioral health patients. This focus includes inpatient psychiatric units in psychiatric hospitals and general and acute hospitals, as well as any “safe room” used to treat such patients in emergency or other departments. Within these areas, ALL ligature and other self-harm risks must be identified, mitigated, and/or eliminated.

Areas that must be assessed for risk include:

- Common areas
- Patient rooms
- Bathrooms
- Emergency rooms
- Any room designated a safe room



Specific items to be assessed might include, among others:

- Access card readers
- Baseboards
- Ceilings
- Chairs/furniture
- Coat hangers
- Curtain cubicle tracks/curtain rods
- Fire extinguishers
- Grab bars
- Medical gas outlets
- Plumbing/plumbing fixtures  
(toilets, toilet paper dispenser,  
toilet seat, etc)
- Security camera
- Signage
- Standard sprinkler heads
- Tables
- Television
- Wall-mounted items
- Window hardware/treatments
- Alcohol-based hand sanitizers
- Beds
- Chimes/strobes
- Cords
- Cover plates
- Door closures/hardware/tops
- Fire hose cabinets
- Medical equipment
- Nurse call pull cord/pillow speaker
- Receptacles
- Robe/towel hooks
- Shower curtain/doors/head/rod
- Smoke detectors
- Suspended ceilings
- Tamper-proof screws
- Trash bags
- Window glass
- Wireless access points

The good news is that health care facilities don't have to go at it alone. **REMEDI8™**, the only national turnkey provider of all things life safety, can perform ligature risk assessments as well as assist in remediation of deficiencies. In the first half of 2017, ligature risks and the presence of risks with inadequate mitigation plans were among the most frequently cited life safety standards. This doesn't have to be your story. We can help reduce those risks and citations – and as a result, ultimately save lives.