Important aspects of the environment addressed in the standards include the following:

- *Safety and security.* This section addresses risks in the physical environment, access to security sensitive areas, product recalls, and smoking.
- *Hazardous materials and waste.* This section addresses risks associated with hazardous chemicals, radioactive materials, hazardous energy sources, hazardous medications, and hazardous gases and vapors.
- *Fire safety.* This section addresses risks from fire, smoke, and other products of combustion; fire response plans; fire drills; management of fire detection, alarm, and suppression equipment and systems; and measures to implement during construction or when the *Life Safety Code®** cannot be met.
- *Medical equipment.* This section addresses selection, testing, and maintenance of medical equipment and contingencies when equipment fails.
- *Utilities.* This section addresses inspection and testing of operating components, control of airborne contaminants, and management of disruptions (*See* IM.01.01.03).

Note: *Previously, this chapter addressed seven aspects of the environment. In this edition, there are only five. Safety and security were combined into a single standard. Emergency management standards, which were once part of this chapter, are now located in a separate chapter, as are requirements related to the* Life Safety Code.

Other Issues for Consideration

1. The hospital that provides care, treatment, and services in space it does not own (for example, in leased or complimentary space) may want to communicate with the property owner about maintenance expectations for building equipment and features not under its control. For example, a hospital may need access to the maintenance documents. This hospital and the property owner may want to discuss any building or equipment problems that could adversely affect the safety or health of patients, staff, and other people coming to the hospital, as well as the property owner's plan to resolve such issues.

2. A number of elements of performance describe time frames for completing certain tasks or functions. The Joint Commission recognizes that it will not always be possible to meet the exact time frames cited in the requirements. For evaluation purposes, therefore, the following intervals are acceptable:
   - *Annually/every 12 months/once a year/every year* = 1 year from the date of the last event, plus or minus 30 days
   - *Every 6 months* = 6 months from the date of the last event, plus or minus 20 days
   - *Quarterly* = 4 times a year, once in each quarter

* *Life Safety Code®* is a registered trademark of the National Fire Protection Association, Quincy, MA.