

# The Joint Commission: Emergency Management Plans and Codes

## Emergency Management Plans and Codes

### Lesson Information

#### Purpose

To provide healthcare workers with information to increase their knowledge and to help them meet the requirements of The Joint Commission, Occupational Safety & Health Administration, and other regulatory bodies, with the goal of providing safe, competent, and quality patient care.

#### Abstract

The Joint Commission requires that healthcare organizations develop and maintain a written emergency management plan. The purpose of the emergency management plan is to establish a strategy for possible emergencies and disasters that cause the disruption of normal operations throughout healthcare organizations. The emergency management plan should describe how the organization responds to both internal and external emergencies. Such preparation helps to ensure the safety of patients, visitors, and employees during emergencies.

This lesson:

- Describes common internal and external emergencies that hospitals may face
- Summarizes the role of the employee during emergencies
- Introduces common terminology used to initiate emergency codes

#### Objectives

Upon completion of this lesson, you will be able to:

1. Identify the purpose of emergency management plans used by healthcare organizations.
2. Recognize three different types of emergencies that may affect your healthcare organization.
3. Identify three emergency codes used to alert employees to emergency and disaster situations.

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## Introduction

The Joint Commission requires healthcare organizations to develop and maintain an emergency management program so that patient care can be continued effectively in the event of emergency or disastrous situations. Healthcare organizations that offer emergency services or that are designated as disaster receiving stations must have an Emergency Operations Plan that covers response to external and internal disasters.<sup>1</sup>

This lesson:

- Describes common internal and external emergencies and disasters that hospitals may face
- Describes the critical elements of an Emergency Operations Plan
- Summarizes the role of the employee during emergencies and disasters
- Introduces common terminology used to initiate emergency codes

Click [The Phases of Emergency Management](#) to read more about the four phases of emergency management planning. (See the Resources section of this document.)

## Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this lesson, you will be able to:

1. Identify the purpose of emergency management plans and emergency operations plans used by healthcare organizations.
2. Recognize three different types of emergencies that may affect your healthcare organization.
3. Identify three emergency codes used to alert employees to emergency and disaster situations.

## Regulatory and Accreditation Requirements

Every healthcare organization is responsible for developing its own guidelines for handling emergencies and disasters. The guidelines should address high-risk problems that are specific to your organization, thereby minimizing the negative impact of these situations. The development of emergency management guidelines should be based on the priorities identified in the [hazard vulnerability analysis \(HVA\)](#) and:

- State and federal laws
- The Hospital Incident Command System (HICS)
- The Joint Commission standards
- Other requirements from accrediting and regulatory agencies

## Emergencies and Disasters

Sound planning helps organizations prepare to respond effectively to different levels of emergencies and disasters.<sup>1</sup> This table describes the difference between an emergency and a disaster.

A Comparison of Emergency and Disaster		
	Emergency	Disaster
<b>Definition</b>	<p>The Joint Commission defines an emergency as an unexpected or sudden event that<sup>1</sup>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significantly disrupts the organization's ability to provide care, treatment, or services</li> <li>• Disrupts the environment of care itself</li> <li>• Results in a sudden and significantly changed or increased demand for the organization's services</li> </ul>	<p>The Joint Commission defines a disaster as a type of emergency that, due to its complexity, scope, or duration, threatens the organization's capabilities and requires outside assistance to sustain patient care, safety, or security functions.<sup>1</sup></p>
<b>Example</b>	<p>A loss of power or telephone services during a severe storm.</p>	<p>A natural or manmade disaster causes significant structural damage to healthcare organizations, homes, and other buildings within the community, requiring that response teams be deployed from nearby cities to aid victims.</p>

Community partners, such as the public health department, other healthcare organizations, and government agencies, should be included in your Emergency Management or Emergency Operations plan.

## Quick Check: Emergencies and Disasters

Select the correct answer then click **Check Answer**.

### Question 1

What is a natural or manmade event that significantly disrupts the environment of care?

- A sentinel event
- An emergency
- A community response system
- An adverse event

 Check Answer    Reset Choices   Next Question 

Question 1 of 1

ANSWER:

### Question 1

What is a natural or manmade event that significantly disrupts the environment of care?

- A sentinel event
- An emergency
- A community response system
- An adverse event

 Check Answer    Reset Choices   Next Question 

Question 1 of 1

**Tries Remaining: 1**

That's correct. The Joint Commission defines an emergency as a natural or manmade event that significantly disrupts the patient care environment.

## Healthcare Organization Emergency Codes

Every healthcare organization must develop specific emergency codes or use plain language (clear text) to communicate to employees about situations that may affect the safety of patients, visitors, and other employees. Effective communication is essential to emergency management planning. Therefore, you need to understand:

- The different types of emergency codes that are used within your organization
- How to respond appropriately to each situation

## Examples of Common Emergency Codes

The table identifies some common emergency codes and their meanings. Even though they are common, they are not universal. It is important that you know the emergency codes within your organization. These codes allow hospital personnel to appropriately respond to an emergency or disaster without alarming patients and visitors.

Code	Description
<b>Yellow</b>	Internal or External Disaster
<b>Black</b>	Bomb Threat
<b>Red</b>	Fire Emergency
<b>Orange</b>	Hazardous Materials Release or Spill
<b>White</b>	Violence or Combative Behavior
<b>Silver</b>	Unauthorized Person with a Weapon
<b>Pink</b>	Infant/Child Abduction
<b>Blue</b>	Medical Emergency: Cardiac or Respiratory Arrest

Some hospitals, in compliance with the National Incident Management System (NIMS), have moved away from common emergency codes to plain language (clear text) such as "Fire Alert (followed by location)" or "Security Alert, active shooter (followed by location)".<sup>2</sup>

## Quick Check: Healthcare Organization Emergency Codes

Select the correct answer then click **Check Answer**.

**Question 1**

Healthcare organizations use emergency codes to communicate emergency and disaster situations that require an immediate response.

- True
- False

 Check Answer    Reset Choices   Next Question 

Question 1 of 1

ANSWER:

**Question 1**

Healthcare organizations use emergency codes to communicate emergency and disaster situations that require an immediate response.

- True
- False

 Check Answer    Reset Choices   Next Question 

Question 1 of 1

**Tries Remaining: 0**

That's correct. Healthcare organizations use specific emergency codes to communicate to employees about emergencies and disasters.

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## Internal Disaster

A disaster may be classified as internal or external.

An internal disaster is an emergency situation that is generated by an event that:

- Occurs within a healthcare organization
- Endangers the safety of patients, visitors, staff, or property

One example of an internal disaster is a hazardous chemical spill or leak.<sup>3</sup>

Internal disasters:

- Sometimes require a relocation of staff and patients to a different area within the organization
- Usually do not completely disrupt day-to-day functions and activities within the healthcare organization as much as external disasters do
- Usually do not last very long

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## **External Disaster**

An external disaster is an emergency situation of significant magnitude that:

- Occurs outside of the healthcare organization
- Endangers the safety or wellbeing of patients, employees, and visitors
- May severely affect the surrounding communities in the area

Examples of external disasters include:

- Earthquakes
- Hurricanes
- Flooding
- Terrorist attacks
- Multi-vehicle accidents

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## **Quick Check: Internal and External Disasters**

While you are at work, a plumbing problem causes flooding on several patient care units. Patients must be moved to another floor overnight while the problem is fixed and the affected area is cleaned up. An emergency code is announced overhead.

Select the correct answer and then click **Check Answer**.

**Question 1**

Why is this event an internal rather than an external disaster?

- Because it is an event that caused hundreds of patients to seek care in the emergency department
- Because patients are being evacuated to another healthcare organization in a nearby city
- Because it is an event occurring within the healthcare organization that endangers the safety of patients, visitors, staff, or property
- Because it affects surrounding communities in your area

 Check Answer    Reset Choices   Next Question    Question 1 of 1    Review Case Scenario

ANSWER:

**Question 1**

Why is this event an internal rather than an external disaster?

- Because it is an event that caused hundreds of patients to seek care in the emergency department
- Because patients are being evacuated to another healthcare organization in a nearby city
- Because it is an event occurring within the healthcare organization that endangers the safety of patients, visitors, staff, or property
- Because it affects surrounding communities in your area

 Check Answer    Reset Choices   Next Question    Question 1 of 1    Review Case Scenario

**Tries Remaining: 1**

That's correct. Internal disasters occur within a healthcare organization and endanger the safety of patients, visitors, staff, or property.

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## Responding to Internal and External Disasters

When an internal or external disaster occurs, these activities take place:

- Leaders within your organization assess the situation and develop a plan for responding appropriately to the event.
- Based on the finding of their assessment, your administrator may initiate an internal or external disaster emergency code, or a code yellow.

- If the emergency disaster code is initiated, follow your organization's Emergency Operations Plan that describes response procedures that must be followed.
- If needed, the hospital incident command system may be implemented.

If you are not affected by the disaster, be prepared to assist patients, visitors, other employees, and emergency responders. In addition, departments that are not affected by the disaster should take inventory of their supplies because they may be needed to help treat those who are injured.

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## Emergency Operations Plan

The Emergency Operations Plan describes how healthcare organizations will:

- Communicate with staff, patients, and external organizations
- Manage resources and assets such as supplies
- Manage safety and security
- Manage staff including roles and responsibilities
- Manage utilities such as water, electricity fuel, and medical gas
- Manage patients including scheduling, triage, assessment, treatment, admission, transfer, and discharge

The Emergency Operations Plan must be tested twice a year to evaluate its effectiveness.<sup>1</sup> As needed, organizations are expected to make required improvements. Check with your educator or manager about your role in disaster preparedness.

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## Hospital Incident Command System

After assessing the disaster, the leaders within your healthcare organization will determine the severity of the situation and decide how to respond. If the consequences of the event are severe, the Hospital Incident Command System (HICS) is implemented.

The Hospital Incident Command System is an incident management system that assists healthcare organizations with emergency planning, response, and recovery capabilities for unplanned events. This reduces individual decision-making and provides leaders with the control that is needed to manage a disaster.

The command system:

- Uses an organizational chart to define specific roles and responsibilities of healthcare workers during a disaster.
- Provides a Job Action Sheet, or job description, for each position on the organizational chart.

Click [Hospital Incident Command System](http://www.educode.com/Images/JC101_60_HICS_organizational_chart.pdf) to see an example of the HICS organizational chart.  
[http://www.educode.com/Images/JC101\\_60\\_HICS\\_organizational\\_chart.pdf](http://www.educode.com/Images/JC101_60_HICS_organizational_chart.pdf)

The Hospital Incident Command System should be consistent with and integrated into the community's command structure. Hospitals that receive certain federal funds for emergency preparedness are required

to incorporate [The National Incident Management System \(NIMS\)](http://www.fema.gov/pdf/emergency/nims/NIMS_core.pdf), into its emergency preparedness plans. The National Incident Management System is directed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).<sup>1</sup> [http://www.fema.gov/pdf/emergency/nims/NIMS\\_core.pdf](http://www.fema.gov/pdf/emergency/nims/NIMS_core.pdf)

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## **Bomb Threat**

A bomb threat is likely to cause a disruption in the day-to-day operations of an organization. However, an actual bombing could result in mass casualties.

Bomb threats evoke a feeling of fear and may cause healthcare workers, patients, and visitors to panic.

Anyone working in your organization may receive a bomb threat. When a bomb threat is received, trained personnel should conduct a thorough search of the organization.

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## **Bomb Threat: If You Receive the Threat**

If you are the one receiving the call when a bomb threat occurs, pay attention to the specifics so that you can communicate them clearly to officials in your organization:

- Pay careful attention to the exact words used by the caller.
- Write down the information as accurately as possible.
- Pay particular attention to the noises in the background to help figure out where the caller is located.
- Try to determine the sex of the caller and any characteristics of the voice, such as the pitch or an accent.

When you get off the phone with the caller, place a call to your organization's operator and state that you have received a bomb threat. The operator will notify security, the local police, and the appropriate leaders in your organization. If directed by the hospital administrator, the operator will announce a Code Black indicating a bomb threat in your organization.

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## **Bomb Threat: Actions to Take**

If a code black is initiated, take these actions:

- Report to your manager immediately.
- Depending on your institution's policies, your manager may give you instructions about searching your immediate work area. In some instances, only trained personnel will conduct the search.
- Do not alarm patients by telling them about the threat. Instead, carefully check the patient care areas for suspicious items.
- Look to see if anything is out of place. Look for bags that have been left or abandoned on your unit. Also, look for packages or boxes with writing on them such as BOMB or TNT.

- As you are searching your work area, avoid the use of radios. The radio waves may cause the bomb to detonate.
- Turning a light switch on or off may also cause a bomb to explode. Therefore, leave lights on if they are already on and leave them off if they are in the off position. Use a flash light instead.

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### Bomb Threat: Finding a Suspicious Package

If you find a suspicious package, do not pick it up. Never touch a bomb or suspected bomb. The task of investigating and handling bombs is the responsibility of the police department.

Leaders within healthcare organizations will typically decide to evacuate patient care areas if a suspicious item is found.

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### Quick Check: Bomb Threat

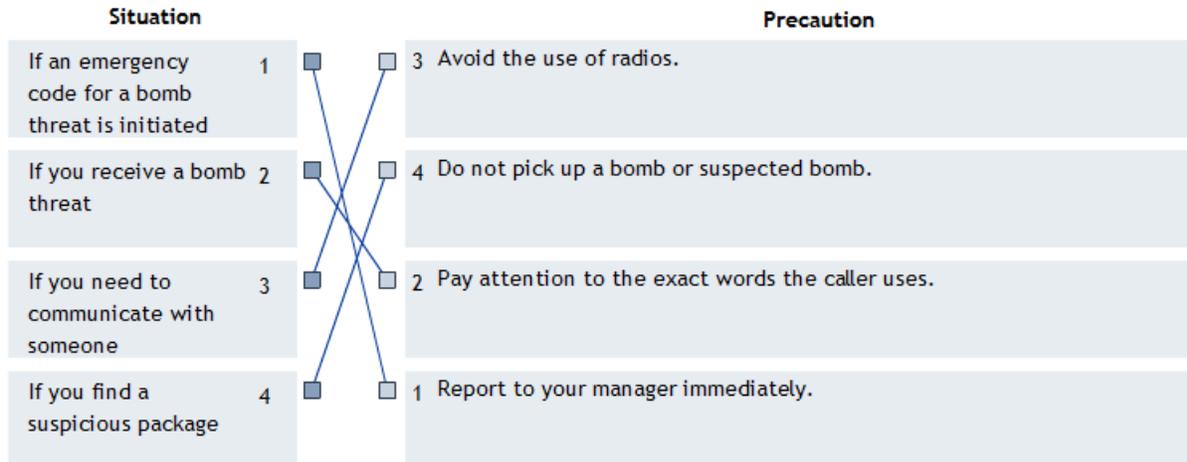
Match each situation with the precaution to take. Use your mouse pointer to drag each blue box to the correct dear box then click **Check Answers** when you are done.

Situation	Precaution
If an emergency code for a bomb threat is initiated 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Avoid the use of radios.
If you receive a bomb threat 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Do not pick up a bomb or suspected bomb.
If you need to communicate with someone 3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Pay attention to the exact words the caller uses.
If you find a suspicious package 4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Report to your manager immediately.

 Check Answers  Answer Key  Reset Choices

Tries Remaining : 2

ANSWER:



Check Answers
 Answer Key
 Reset Choices

The correct matches are shown.

Tries Remaining : 2

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## Hazardous Materials Accident

The accidental release or spill of a hazardous material may cause injury or illness to patients, visitors, employees, and the environment.

Only those trained specifically in the cleanup of hazardous materials should clean a chemical spill. Your organization's hazardous communication program describes specific guidelines for handling the accidental release or spill of hazardous materials.

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## Discovering a Hazardous Chemical Spill

If you discover a hazardous chemical spill, you should:

- Take measures to isolate the area to keep individuals away from the spill.
- Contact your supervisor or manager and describe the spill to him or her.
- Help locate information about the chemical using safety data sheets.

Your supervisor or manager will assess the situation using your hospital's criteria and decide whether emergency responders are needed. Your manager may ask you to contact your organization's operator and identify the location of the spill and ask for the initiation of a code orange, indicating a hazardous chemical spill.

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## Responding to a Hazardous Chemical Spill

If your department is not the site of the hazardous spill but you hear the initiation of a code orange, you should:

- Report to your supervisor or manager for instructions about securing your work area to prevent unauthorized access to areas with hazardous conditions.
- Prepare to assist with evacuations as needed.
- Keep hallways clear to allow emergency responders access throughout the organization.

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### Quick Check: Hazardous Materials Accident

True

False

If you discover a hazardous chemical spill, you should take measures to isolate the area to keep individuals away from the spill.

✓ True

False

You supervisor or manager will assess the situation using the hospital's criteria and decide whether emergency responders are needed.

That's correct. Your supervisor or manager makes an assessment using your hospital's criteria to decide whether emergency responders are needed.

True

False

If the chemical spill is not in your area, there are no specific actions you can take to help.

 Answer Key

 Reset Choices

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### Fire Emergency

Every healthcare organization has fire safety plans, most of which are based on the Life Safety Code™ requirements developed by the International Fire Protection Association.<sup>4</sup> If you see or smell smoke or a fire, or feel heat on the wall or doors that is not normal, initiate a code red. Think of the acronym RACE to help you remember the critical steps for initiating a code red.

Click each flashcard to view actions to take when you see or suspect a fire emergency.

### RACE

R = RESCUE	A = ACTIVATE	C = CONTAIN	E = EXTINGUISH
			
Rescue patients and visitors who are in immediate danger.	Activate the alarm system.	Contain the fire.	Extinguish the fire.

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## Operating a Portable Fire Extinguisher

An easy way to remember how to use a portable fire extinguisher is by recalling the acronym PASS. To operate a portable fire extinguisher, move about 6 to 8 feet away from the fire, and then:

1. **P**ull the pin on the fire extinguisher.
2. **A**im the hose at the base or bottom of the fire.
3. **S**queeze the handle of the extinguisher.
4. **S**weep from side-to-side while spraying the chemical from the extinguisher.

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## Quick Check: Operating a Fire Extinguisher

Click and drag each number to a box to indicate the correct sequence then click **Check Answers**.

1 2 3 4

Sweep from side-to-side while spraying the chemical from the extinguisher.

Pull the pin on the fire extinguisher.

Aim the hose at the base or bottom of the fire.

Squeeze the handle of the extinguisher.

Check Answers Answer Key Reset Choices Tries Remaining: 2

ANSWER:

Pull the pin on the fire extinguisher. Correct! 1

Aim the hose at the base or bottom of the fire. Correct! 2

Squeeze the handle of the extinguisher. Correct! 3

Sweep from side-to-side while spraying the chemical from the extinguisher. Correct! 4

Check Answers Answer Key Reset Choices Tries Remaining: 2

The correct sequence is shown.

Healthcare and social services workers are at high risk for workplace violence, according to the Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA). A display of combative or abusive behavior may be seen by a patient, a patient's family members, healthcare workers, or the family members of healthcare workers.<sup>5</sup>

If you become concerned about your safety or the safety of others due to a display of combative or abusive behavior, initiate a code white. A code white alerts others that you need help handling an escalating situation.

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## Combative and Abusive Behavior Response

If you hear a staff member reporting a code white, contact the operator and identify the location of the incident. The operator will dispatch the code white response team to the location of the incident. When they arrive, let them handle the situation. They are trained to handle problems that involve actual or possible harm to others.

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*Click the arrows to view information about what to do while waiting for the arrival of the emergency code response team.*



Help calm the attacker. Many times you can calm or defuse a situation by making patients aware of their behavior without putting them on the defensive.

However, be careful about what you say and the way you say it. Your words and your tone can either resolve the situation or make it worse.

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*Click the arrows to view information about what to do while waiting for the arrival of the emergency code response team.*



Ensure there is enough distance between the attacker and the person being abused. If you assist a victim who is being physically abused, try to create a diversion, such as a loud noise, that would provide an opportunity to create distance between the person being abused and the attacker.



*Click the arrows to view information about what to do while waiting for the arrival of the emergency code response team.*



Document the incident according to your organization's policies and procedures.

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## Person with a Weapon

A code silver indicates that someone has been seen with a weapon or there is a hostage situation in your healthcare organization. A weapon is any type of firearm, knife, or device that can cause bodily harm or injury. Individuals, other than security personnel or law enforcement officers, should not carry weapons on hospital property.

A code silver situation requires extreme caution and careful tactics to ensure the safety of patients, visitors, and other employees. If you see someone with a weapon or suspect that someone has a weapon:

- Call your organization's operator and initiate a code silver.
- Be prepared to tell the operator the location of the person carrying the weapon.
- Give the operator a description of the person and the actual weapon.

When a code silver is initiated, the operator calls the local police department. The local police will take control of the situation when they arrive on the scene.

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## Responding to a Person with a Weapon

When you hear the initiation of a code silver, close all doors throughout the patient care area, including unit exit doors. Report to your manager when this task is complete to find out if you need to take further steps to secure your work area.

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## Quick Check: Combative and Abusive Behavior Response

You are providing patient care when you hear yelling in the hallway. You step to the door and see that two of your coworkers are having a loud conversation. One of them states, "Don't do that again!" She then delivers a push to the shoulder of the other healthcare worker.

Select the correct answer and then click **Check Answer**.

**Question 1**

What action should you take?

- Yell at both parties to get back to work before the manager finds out about the incident.
- Separate the two workers and stand between them to keep them apart.
- Call for help to handle the situation and initiate the appropriate emergency code.
- Ignore the situation because it involves two adults.



Check Answer



Reset Choices

Next Question



Question 1 of 1



Review Case Scenario

ANSWER:

**Question 1**

What action should you take?

- Yell at both parties to get back to work before the manager finds out about the incident.
- Separate the two workers and stand between them to keep them apart.
- Call for help to handle the situation and initiate the appropriate emergency code.
- Ignore the situation because it involves two adults.



Check Answer



Reset Choices

Next Question



Question 1 of 1



Review Case Scenario

**Tries Remaining: 1**

That's correct. Call for help and initiate the proper emergency code when you are concerned about your safety or the safety of others due to a display of combative or abusive behavior.

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## Infant or Child Abduction

Infant or child abduction is another serious situation that healthcare organizations may face. An abduction is an incident whereby an infant or child is missing or is taken from a designated patient care area within the healthcare organization. Initiate a code pink when an infant or child has been abducted.

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## **Infant or Child Abduction: Responsibilities for Employees in the Immediate Care Environment**

Help search the patient care area if you work in the department where the abduction took place. Additional tasks for the healthcare team to complete include:

- Searching nonpatient care areas, such as the staff locker rooms, equipment rooms, bathrooms, and waiting areas
- Notifying the pediatrician and obstetrician about the incident
- Contacting the Social Services and Pastoral Care Departments for assistance
- Maintaining patient confidentiality
- Moving the parents of the infant to a different room, if their room is considered part of the crime scene
- Reporting to your manager or supervisor for additional instructions

If you have direct knowledge about the incident, work with security and law enforcement officials to document information about the kidnapper and the involved infant or child.

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## **Infant or Child Abduction: Responsibilities for Employees throughout the Organization**

When an abduction occurs, the general responsibilities of the healthcare workers throughout the healthcare organization include:

- Monitoring all exits that are close to the area of abduction, including the stair and elevator doors
- Reporting individuals who appear to be suspicious or show unusual behaviors that indicate they are the potential abductor
- Checking the exterior areas for persons trying to leave the grounds of your organization with bundles of items or big back packs

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## **Quick Check: Infant or Child Abduction**

Your unit is located near Labor and Delivery. You hear an announcement overhead which is the emergency code indicating an infant abduction has taken place.

Select the correct answer and then click **Check Answer**.

#### Question 1

What should you do?

- Tell other patients and visitors about the abduction, including the name of the mother and baby.
- Immediately start monitoring the exits, stairways, and elevator areas.
- Report to the nursery to help take care of the newborn babies.
- Lock all of your patients in their rooms to prevent another abduction.

 Check Answer    Reset Choices   Next Question    Question 1 of 1    Review Case Scenario

ANSWER:

#### Question 1

What should you do?

- Tell other patients and visitors about the abduction, including the name of the mother and baby.
- Immediately start monitoring the exits, stairways, and elevator areas.
- Report to the nursery to help take care of the newborn babies.
- Lock all of your patients in their rooms to prevent another abduction.

 Check Answer    Reset Choices   Next Question    Question 1 of 1    Review Case Scenario

**Tries Remaining: 1**

That's correct. To prevent the individual from leaving the hospital property with the newborn, you should monitor the exits and elevators in your work area.

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## Cardiac and Respiratory Arrest

Some medical emergencies, such as a cardiac arrest, are assigned special emergency codes. A code blue is initiated whenever an individual in the healthcare organization experiences a cardiac or respiratory arrest. However, you would not initiate a code blue for patients who have completed an advance directive for healthcare indicating their desire not to be resuscitated.

The roles and responsibilities vary for those responding to the code blue based on their scope of practice. Tasks to be performed during a code blue include:

- Bringing a crash cart to the location of the emergency

- Starting cardiopulmonary resuscitation
- Providing care based on the Advanced Cardiopulmonary Life Support standards
- Documenting the events of the emergency



Did You Know?

Some organizations have different codes for cardiac emergencies involving an infant or a child. Check your organization's policies and procedures.

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## Evaluation of Emergency and Disaster Response Efforts

After implementation of any emergency or disaster plans, a formal evaluation process should take place to determine:

- What went well
- What problems were identified

Results from the evaluation should be used to modify or improve your organization's emergency operations plan.

To help improve your organization's response to emergencies and disasters, provide feedback to your manager about the response efforts.

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## Summary

Sound emergency and disaster management plans are essential to responding appropriately to unplanned events. Within your organization, emergencies and disasters are announced using specific code terminology to alert hospital personnel of an urgent situation. When you work in different healthcare organizations, make sure that you take the time to become familiar with the different types of codes that are used to communicate emergencies and disasters. This is especially important because many healthcare organizations use different codes for different situations.

Review your organization's emergency management plan to understand what your role is when responding to emergencies and disasters. Contact your manager or supervisor if you have questions about your organization's emergency management plan or the use of emergency codes.

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# Resources

Resource 1: [The Phases of Emergency Management](#)

The Phases of Emergency Management	
Phase	Activities Performed During each Phase
Preparedness/risk assessment	<p>Steps are taken to evaluate the organization's weaknesses or vulnerabilities and propensity for an emergency or a disaster.</p> <p>Issues to consider include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weather patterns</li> <li>• Geographic location</li> <li>• Expectations related to public events and gatherings</li> <li>• Age, condition, and location of the organization</li> <li>• Industries in close proximity to the organization, such as nuclear power plants or chemical factories</li> </ul>
Mitigation	<p>Preventative measures are taken to lessen the impact of an emergency or a disaster.</p> <p>Examples of mitigation activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Installing and maintaining backup generator power to mitigate the effects of a power failure</li> <li>• Cross-training staff to perform other tasks to maintain services during a staffing crisis that is caused by a weather emergency</li> </ul>
Response	<p>Response includes the actual implementation of the emergency or disaster plan. The plan should include use of the incident command system.</p> <p>Response activities should be monitored continually and adjusted to changing situations.</p>
Recovery	<p>When an emergency or disaster subsides, the organization and staff need to recover from disrupted services.</p> <p>Recovery is usually easier if, during the response, some of the staff have been assigned to maintain essential services and others have been assigned to disaster response.</p>

Adapted from Veenema T. *ReadyRN: Disaster Nursing and Emergency Preparedness* [course online]. Philadelphia, Pa: Elsevier/MC Strategies; 2009.

# Glossary

**Hazard vulnerability analysis (HVA):**

A process for identifying potential emergencies and the direct and indirect effects these emergencies may have on the organization's operations and demand for services.<sup>1</sup>

## General Instructions for Taking Tests

You have chosen to begin the test on:

### The Joint Commission: Emergency Management Plans and Codes

There are 10 questions in this test. Be sure you have enough time to complete all questions before you continue. If you exit the test before clicking 'Complete the Test,' your answers to the questions will not be saved. If you leave some questions blank and click, 'Complete the Test,' any unanswered questions will be scored as incorrect.

Tests may include case studies, true/false, and multiple choice questions, including single or multiple answer. Your test score is the percentage of questions answered correctly out of the total.

If you are ready to begin, click **Take Test** in the menu bar above.

You have the option to take this test later. If you would rather take this test later, click **Personal Page** in the menu bar above to return to your list of assigned lessons.

After you achieve a passing score for this test, please click **Evaluation** to complete and submit an evaluation of the activity.

## Post test – Emergency Management Plans and Codes

1. The leaders within your organization can develop emergency management and emergency operations plans without input from regulatory and accrediting agencies.
  - A. True
  - B. False
2. What is the name of a response system that clearly defines the function and role of employees during a disaster in a healthcare organization?
  - A. Hospital Incident Command System
  - B. Hospital Decision-Making Tree
  - C. Hospital Management Organizational Chart
  - D. Hospital Triage System
3. What is the purpose of your organization's emergency management program?
  - A. To empower individual employees to react to emergency and disaster situations according to their own belief system
  - B. To help your organization respond effectively and efficiently to different levels of emergency and disaster situations
  - C. To help local and state law enforcers catch criminals in the community
  - D. To train leaders within the organization on how to dominate others during times of critical decision-making
4. What is an infant abduction?
  - A. A situation whereby a mother checks out of the hospital with her baby against medical advice
  - B. A situation whereby the mother and father of the infant decide to give the baby up for adoption
  - C. A situation whereby a mother does not bond well with her newborn
  - D. A situation whereby an infant either is missing or has been taken from the healthcare unit without permission
5. Your organization's emergency management plans only cover combative or abusive behavior that is displayed by patients and their family members toward healthcare workers.
  - A. True
  - B. False

6. If you find a suspicious package during a bomb threat, what should you do?
- A. Pick up the package and listen closely for any sound that it makes.
  - B. Carefully open the package to find out what is inside.
  - C. Contact the police and tell them about the package so that they can investigate the matter.
  - D. Call for the assistance of another employee to help you carry the package to the incident command station.
7. What code do you use to signal a fire emergency?
- A. Code Black
  - B. Code Pink
  - C. Code Red
  - D. Code White
8. If you hear a code silver alert, what should you do?
- A. Look for an elderly patient who may be lost in the building.
  - B. Move patients away from windows because of severe weather.
  - C. Report to the location of the incident to help with a hazardous chemical spill.
  - D. Begin closing doors in the patient care areas because an individual has been sighted with a weapon.
9. Internal disasters are usually short-term and are not severe enough to disrupt the entire healthcare organization.
- A. True
  - B. False
10. What should you do if you are walking through a patient care area and hear someone yelling code blue?
- A. Call the operator to initiate the code then take the crash cart into the room.
  - B. Start checking the rooms in your department for suspicious packages.
  - C. Prepare to evacuate patients from rooms that are next door to the incident.
  - D. Walk into the patient's room to help calm the patient and family member who are being verbally abusive.