

What's new in the EOC?

Issues and Answers Pertaining to the Hospital Environment of Care

Security Coordinator Named

Officer Lisa Blankenship has been named Medical Center Security Coordinator, replacing Captain Henry Huff.

Disaster Drill Scheduled for June 17

UK Hospital will participate in a 22-county regional disaster drill on June 17. The exercise scenario will run for 8 hours, between 2 and 10 p.m.

Emergency Multi-Lingual Phrasebook Available Online

The address is long, but the help it provides during an emergency could be priceless. This multi-lingual phrase book provides lists of common medical questions in English and a host of other languages. To download, go to:

http://www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidanceArticle/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=4073230&chk=8XboAN

2003 Safety Survey Results at a Glance

Number of surveys completed	2814	
Average time to complete survey	11 min.	
Overall Average Score	84.5%	
By Safety Topic	2003 Avg.	2002 Avg.
Security	94%	94%
Fire Prevention	90%	93%
Emergency Management	81%	95%
Hazardous Materials	80%	92%
Utilities Management	86%	93%
Medical Equipment	76%	98%
Hot Topic	95%	90%

Hospital Safety is in the process of looking at scores by department. The Safety Officer will provide results when they are available.

Violence sometimes considered an occupational hazard in healthcare

Excerpts from the 2002 NIOSH report.

In April 2002, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) issued a revised report on violence in hospitals. According to the report, hospital workers sustained 2,637 non-fatal assaults in 1999—8.3 assaults per 10,000 workers. This rate is over 4 times the average for other industries.

What is workplace violence?

Acts of workplace violence range from threatening language to homicide. They include:

Threats: Expressions of intent to cause harm, including verbal threats, threatening body language, and written threats.

Physical assaults: Attacks ranging from slapping and beating to rape, homicide, and the use of weapons such as firearms, bombs, or knives.

Muggings: Aggravated assaults, usually conducted by surprise and with intent to rob.

Why is the risk of violence so high in hospitals?

In other workplaces where violence is prevalent, like convenience stores or taxi services, violence generally occurs during a robbery attempt. In hospitals, however, violence usually results from patients and occasionally from their family members who feel frustrated, vulnerable, and out of control.

Studies indicate that violence in hospitals often takes place during times of high activity and interaction with patients, such as at meal times, visiting hours, and during patient transportation. Assaults may occur when

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Workplace Violence in Healthcare

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service is denied, when a patient is involuntarily admitted, or when a health care worker attempts to set limits on eating, drinking, tobacco or alcohol use, or visiting hours.

Although any area of the hospital could be the scene of workplace violence, some areas—such as the emergency department, the psychiatric unit, waiting areas—have more of a risk than others...for obvious reasons.

People have more of a tendency to become violent when they:

- Are under the influence of drugs or alcohol or have a history of violence or certain psychiatric disorders
- Experience long waits for service
- Feel forced to wait in overcrowded, uncomfortable waiting rooms
- Are afraid or feel like their world is out of control

Reducing the Risk of Workplace Violence at UK Hospital

Although some of the factors that influence violent behavior cannot easily be controlled, UK Hospital does conduct security risk assessments and study reported incident trends to identify ways to reduce the risks.

Over the last few years, the Hospital has:

- Restricted to movement of the public by installing card access to some hospital areas
- Installed panic alarm systems in the ED
- Installed emergency call boxes in the hospital parking garage
- Improved lighting in exterior walkways
- Installed cameras in isolated areas
- Enclosed the triage and registration areas in the ED



- Implemented staffing patterns and work flow to reduce the waiting time for service
- Provided security escorts for late night visitors and staff
- Conducted workplace violence education classes
- Increased security patrols in isolated and high-security areas
- Improved security personnel training

UK's approach to reducing workplace violence follows closely the suggestions made by the Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA). OSHA does not have specific standards on workplace violence, but it does require all employers to provide safety job sites and it has cited hospitals for workplace violence issues, using the general duty clause.

There's More Work to Do

One of the best ways to reduce the risk of workplace violence is to ensure that all hospital personnel are aware of the risks and dangers and follow safe work practices.

Staff can learn about preventing workplace at UK Hospital in a variety of ways.

- Encourage or require employees to enroll in the Workplace Violence CBL, available on NetLearning.
- Provide brochures outlining risk factors and signs, available through Staff Education.
- Show the video, *Workplace Violence: Recognizing and Defusing Aggressive Behavior*, in staff meeting. The video is available through Hospital Safety.
- Arrange for a Workplace Violence Prevention Class for your employees by contacting Carol Dickey, Director of Staff Education.

From the 2003 Safety Survey...

Q: True or False? All incidents of workplace violence, including threats, should be reported to Security.
A: True

98% answered correctly.

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