

## Hospital Labels Fire Doors



The Hospital is labeling fire doors to make it easier for employees to identify an area of refuge. An area of refuge is the staging area where patients or others can be moved during a horizontal or partial evacuation. The idea is to move to the other side of a firewall—a wall that has been constructed specifically to limit the spread of smoke or fire. Identifying the door—the passage through that wall—is the easiest way to guide employees.

The new bright red labels will be affixed to the upper corner of the door.



News in the EOC  
*Issues and Answers About  
the Environment of Care*

## No Food or Drink in Patient Areas-- An OSHA Standard

*Employees often ask why the Hospital doesn't allow food or drink in patient care areas. Here's the answer—straight from OSHA.*

The Bloodborne Pathogens standard section 1910.1030(d)(2)(ix) says, "eating, drinking, smoking, applying cosmetics or lip balm, and handling contact lenses are prohibited in work areas where there is a reasonable likelihood of occupational exposure."

According to a consultant from the Greeley Corporation, convincing a surveyor that a patient care area doesn't have a reasonable likelihood of an exposure is difficult.

The bottom line: Don't allow employees to increase their personal risk, because the Hospital runs the risk of an increased liability if an exposure occurs.

## Hospital Changes the Way It Evaluates Fire Drills

*Scoring is designed to reinforce accountability*

Beginning in October 2004, the Hospital will implement a scoring system to evaluate facility readiness, employee knowledge, and staff response to fire drills. The new scoring system will allow Hospital Safety to measure compliance with life safety requirements. As in the past, Hospital Safety will send the evaluation, including the score, and a list of deficiencies to area managers or directors. Hospital administration will receive only the scores.

The new scoring system sets a standard and measures against it to emphasize leadership's responsibility to ensure that hospital areas are maintained for life safety and that hospital employees are trained and ready to respond. The standard is 90 percent.

The Hospital conducts fire drills in compliance with Life Safety Code, state licensure, and JCAHO requirements—that is one per shift per quarter in health care occupancies. That translates into a drill a month in areas that operate 24 hours a day.

Every month, the hospital conducts fire drills, and every month, evaluators note the same or similar problems. Frustrated by the Hospital's inability to improve its readiness and performance on fire drills, the Environment of Care Committee directed the Hospital Safety Officer to develop an evaluation tool that will allow more accurate measurement and identification of those areas that do not meet the Hospital's standard for compliance.

A draft of the revised evaluation form is being sent as an attachment with this newsletter.