

Clinic Emergency Preparedness: How Much Training Is Enough ?



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Beautiful End To A Great Vacation

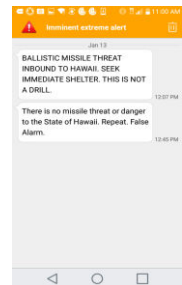
We arrived in Hawaii for a conference late on a Friday night. Being from Minnesota, we were thrilled to step off the plane and feel the glorious warmth of the Hawaiian evening. After 20 minutes waiting for the luggage in jeans and shirts - someone even muttered: "Man... it's hot" !



Unfortunately - being on CST still, we awoke the next morning at 700 AM so we decided breakfast was definitely in order. Off we went to the buffet. We were just sitting down to eat, watching some snorkelers and dolphins playing off the shore, when someone's phone rudely went off.



And then another, and another, and then ours. Staring at the phone and wondering what was going on - this is what we saw. And then, the world became very surreal.



There was a mass exodus from the hotel... **of staff**.. heading home to be with their loved ones.



This left the tourists sitting in the outdoor lobby watching the sky and waiting. But no one, *including management*, had any real plan but to wait. The alert was over in 38 minutes - it was a "false alarm". Two hours later, they still found people hiding in closets taking shelter.

Many managers, doctors and administrators spoke for the next week about how things went during this "crisis" ... and the fears that island staff, as well as the tourist, had.

There was NO direction. NO input. NO communication. So we fended for ourselves in a strange land.

And I realized - they weren't ready...so was my staff ready in our environment ?



Do Your Staff Know What To Do With...?

- Slips, Trips and Falls
- Ergonomic & Equipment Issues
- Fire Safety/
Tornado Safety/
Weather Safety
- Intruder/Suspicious Person



Slips, Trips and Falls & Collisions

The National Safety Council reports that people are two and half times more likely to have a disabling accident in the office setting and that one of the most common causes of office falls is tripping over an open desk/file drawer.

Other common accidents?

- *Bending over while seated in an unstable chair and falling out
- * tripping over electrical cords/wires
- * slipping on wet floors
- * using a chair or stack of boxes in place of a ladder (OSHA)



Falls Are Preventable

- Look before you walk.
- If you're done with a drawer, close it !
- Report any loose carpeting or electrical cords in walkways that can cause bumps in carpets.
- ALL spills need to be cleaned immediately from the floor
- Use a stepladder, never a chair, if you need to reach something overhead.



One of the biggest issues happens when staff use creative ways to reach objects in high places. Often, they'll climb on office chairs that roll out from under them !

Have a step stool, or if objects are higher, reinforced ladder for them to use. And make it a discipline issue if they continue to practice unsafe behavior.



Watch the Business Office and Clinic Store Rooms !

Stacking file boxes, invoice boxes and supply deliveries can be convenient for the staff (they are available), and an innocent oversight, but it causes a number of hazards in the office. Besides tripping or falling over boxes - there is also the potential when lifting heavy boxes incorrectly causing back injuries.



Floor Mats:

Be careful with floor mats that are put down to protect the rug/floors.

Make sure they do not curl up or wrinkle causing falls. Patients with walkers are at particular risk. They often catch the corners of the mats with their walkers and end up falling.



Beware of wiring that runs through, near or under areas of high traffic or where their feet can become entangled (like under the desk). Wiring under desks should be "cinched" out of the way - or a wiring trough should be installed to "catch" the wiring.



Power strips should never be used to power appliances such as coffee pots, microwave ovens, toasters or refrigerators.

Power strips also cannot be used with extension cords (constitutes a **daisy chain** extension cord). (OSHA)



All instruments should be plugged directly into the wall - check to see if they need a GFI type outlet or into a surge protector. Check with your equipment companies.



Ergonomics & Equipment Issues

Chairs and desks wear out just like any other types of equipment. Broken or missing casters can make a chair, or desk, unstable. To prevent accidents chairs/desks should be inspected regularly, just like any other office equipment, and issues should be repaired or replaced immediately. If a chair/stool is reported, it should be removed from service.



Patients & Rolling Chairs or Stools

Make sure that all patient chairs and stools have locking casters on them - especially diagnostic chairs. Patients often lean forward in the chair because of physical issues. Eventually, the chair will scoot out from under them either because they don't fit in it or because they have balance limitations, sending the patient to the floor ...especially the OCT and VF machines



And Speaking of Exam Chairs

Talk with your staff, and your doctor, and make sure they are not elevating the exam chair, and then leaving the patient in the room with the lights off!

Or starting the HVF, and then leaving the patient in the dark to go answer phone calls. The patient forgets they are elevated, and reaches for their purse....and falls. This is negligence if they get injured.



Repetition

Talk with your technicians regarding their technique when using the phoropter. Many technicians stay seated on the stool and reach to the patient.

This causes a bend to their wrist at an angle that can cause wrist, forearm, shoulder and potential back issues. While workman's comp cases have been rarely approved these cases *in the past* - they are becoming more prevalent



Did You Know ?

- Caregivers have one of the highest rates of injury
- 12% of caregivers leave the profession each year due to back injuries (mnhospitals.org)
- Over 52% of caregivers complain of chronic back pain
- Repetition of the task and awkward posture are two key elements to injury



Transferring Patients

Ask the patient or caregiver about

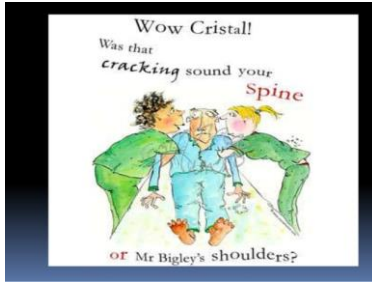
- preferred transfer method
 - patient's ability to help
 - use of special padding or a device for collecting urine probability of spasms
- *Reduce the patient's anxiety by announcing what you are doing



- * Remove the footrests
- Position the wheelchair close to the exam chair.
- Lock the wheels in place and turn the front casters forward.



Better Yet - Don't Transfer Patients !!!



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Fires In The Office

Offices have more fire hazards than most managers realize. Besides injuries and/or death to staff or patients, fires can destroy patient documents, billing invoices, and equipment, so fire prevention should be a high priority. Do you have a HIPAA/IT Security Risk Assessment plan ?!



R.A.C.E

- **Rescue** anyone threatened by fire .Move patients to safety.
- **Alarm**. Activate the fire alarm immediately and respond to the alarm when you hear it
- **CLOSE** doors to prevent fire spread.
- **Extinguish** the fire *only if the fire is small and you know how to use a fire extinguisher.*



saroptstroy.ru

Never Use The Elevator

- Elevators should never be used by building occupants during a fire emergency !
- They often fail during a fire causing you to be trapped
- Elevator shafts may fill with smoke
- The elevator needs to be available for firefighters in case of emergency needs. (elevators ltd.org)



EMERGENCY PLANS

- All offices need an emergency plan - including:
- * Maps listing fire exits, fire extinguishers and alarm pulls (OSHA & Multiple government agencies including Centers for Medicare)
 - Each site needs a designated reporting space away from the building to account for all evacuated employees.
 - Include procedures for evacuating staff or patients with disabilities and review them frequently.



Check Your Environment Routinely

Fire doors and escape routes don't become blocked by furniture or boxes. Emergency exits should also be properly lit and marked, and all employees should know where the nearest exit can be found. Have routine clinic exams (monthly) to check wiring, rug safety, exit safety, lit exits. Ensure that employees know the safest ways to exit in case of an emergency.



Have A Centralized Meeting Site

All staff need to stay until released to make sure everyone is accountable.



What Does OSHA have to say about this ?

OSHA guidelines specify the employee fire extinguisher training requirements: "1910.157(g)

(1) Where the employer has provided portable fire extinguishers for employee use in the workplace, the employer shall also provide an educational program to familiarize employees with the general principles of fire extinguisher use and the hazards involved with incipient stage fire fighting".



YEARLY Training Is Not Only Critical - It Is MANDATORY

Employee training is critical. Do your staff know how to use the fire extinguishers ?

Do they know where to report for ALL offices ?

Do they know where the alarms are in the office ? And the exit routes? How do YOU KNOW ?!



Fire Extinguisher

- Bring a fire extinguisher to the location of the fire.
- Operate the extinguisher using the "pass" method.
 - Pull the safety pin
 - Aim at the base of the fire
 - Squeeze the trigger
 - Sweep back and forth



Slideshare.net

Tornados

Similar to fire, and other weather hazards, employees need to have a plan for tornados. A **Weather Early Alert Radio** should be ON in all clinics at *all time* to warn staff when inclement weather is approaching:

- Seek a small interior room or hallway on the lowest floor possible
- Stay away from doors, windows and outside walls
- Stay in the center of the room and avoid corners (because they attract debris)
- Find rooms constructed with reinforced concrete, brick or block with no windows or roof system overhead
- Avoid auditoriums, cafeterias and gymnasiums that have flat, wide-span roofs

Tornado Preparedness

A tornado can occur at any time of year. Tornados usually occur between 3 and 9 PM but can happen at any time. The average tornado moves southwest to northeast, but they can move in any direction.

TORNADO WEATHER TERMS:

Tornado Watch: Tornados are possible in your area. Remain alert for approaching storms

Tornado Warning: A tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar. Move to a safe place immediately

- In a home or building, move the lowest level - If there is no basement, move to an interior room or hallway on the lowest floor. Stay away from windows

- Don't try to outrun a tornado in your car; leave it immediately and lie flat in a ditch or depression

Mobile homes offer little protection from tornados and should be abandoned. If you cannot reach a shelter, lie flat in a ditch or depression.

TORNADO SIGNS:

- Dark, often greenish sky
- Wall Cloud
- Large Hail
- Loud roar similar to a freight train
- Funnel

TORNADO PREPAREDNESS: DISASTER KIT

- 3-day supply of water (1 gallon/person/day)
- Battery powered NOAA weather radio
- Non-perishable food
- Flashlights, extra batteries
- Change of clothing, footwear
- First aid kit, prescription medicines
- Cash/Credit Card
- Special items/food needed by infants, pets

IF SEVERE WEATHER IS EXPECTED, STAY TUNED TO RADIO OR TELEVISION FOR IMPORTANT WEATHER UPDATES AND SAFETY INFORMATION.

Have a NOAA Weather Radio with a warning alarm tone and battery back-up to receive severe weather warnings

For more information on tornado preparedness, visit <http://www.ready.gov/tornados>

Allegheny County Department of Emergency Services



Tornado Myths and Truths

MYTH: Areas near lakes, rivers, and hills are safe from tornadoes.
TRUTH: No place is safe from tornadoes. The tornado that struck Door County in August 1998 formed on the waters of Green Bay and moved onshore, causing over \$5 million in damage.

MYTH: The low pressure with a tornado causes buildings to explode as the tornado passes overhead.
TRUTH: Violent winds and debris slamming into buildings cause most structural damage.

MYTH: Windows should be opened before a tornado approaches to equalize pressure and minimize damage.
TRUTH: Leave windows alone. The most important action is to immediately go to a safe shelter.

MYTH: People caught in the open should seek shelter under highway overpasses.
TRUTH: Take shelter in a sturdy, reinforced building if at all possible. The winds of a tornado may actually increase in the tight space of an overpass, increasing the chance for injury.

search.com

What to do **during** an earthquake

 DROP!	 COVER!	 HOLD ON!
 CALM DOWN Try to stay as calm as possible	 INSIDE Stay away from furniture, windows and lamps	 OUTSIDE Stay away from buildings, walls and power poles
 STOP If you are driving stop in a safe place, turn on the hazard lights and stay inside the vehicle dhakatribune.com	 If you use a wheelchair, put the brakes on in a safe place and protect your head with your arms	 If you are in a crowded place, protect your head with your arms or take cover under seats and tables

Hellotravel.com


Workplace Intruder/Violence



How Did We Ever Get To This Point of Work Place Violence?


September 11, 2001 the terrorist attacks in New York, Washington, D.C., and Shanksville, Pennsylvania reminded us all of the threat that is posed by international terrorism.

Except for the attack on the Pentagon, the targets chosen by the terrorists were *not* military, but were **workplaces** where thousands of people work every day.



What Is Considered Workplace Violence ?

• Beatings	* Threats
• Stabbings	* Threats or Obscene Phone calls
• Suicides	* Intimidation
• Shootings	* Being sworn at, followed or shouted at
• Rapes	
• Near Suicides	
• Psychological	
• Trauma	



44%

of work-related homicides were committed by someone known by the workplace.

17%	were a relative or domestic partner
12%	were a student, patient, or customer/client
15%	were a coworker or work associate

BSM.com

Zero Tolerance Policy

One of the best protections employers can offer their workers is to establish a **zero tolerance policy** toward workplace violence. This policy should cover all workers, patients, clients, visitors, contractors, and anyone else who may come in contact with company personnel.

Healthcare and social service workers face significant risks of job related violence.



HOW TO RESPOND WHEN AN

ACTIVE SHOOTER

IS IN YOUR VICINITY



RUN

- Have an escape route and plan in mind
- Leave your belongings behind
- Keep your hands visible

Take others with you !!!!!

Themacweekly.com

Run, Hide, Fight

Hide in an area out of the shooter's view !!

- Block the entry to your hiding place and lock the doors
- **Silence** your cell phone and/or pager



If you can't exit, and you know your threat is in between you and the exit, then you're going to have to hide.



- Do everything you can to prevent the shooter from entering the room.
- **Turn the lights off.**
- The more weight and objects you put against the door the better your odd that the shooter can't get in.

IF The Shooter Gets In....

Try to fight the shooter - as a group is better.

Act with extreme physical aggression and throw items at the active shooter. Scream, yell, hit, fight. If it comes to it, you literally are going to fight for your life- utilize everything you can as a weapon.

This could include: scissors, hot coffee, or a fire extinguisher.



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