

HIGH DESERT HEALTH SYSTEM AMBULATORY SURGICAL CENTER

SUBJECT: CODE SILVER: PERSON WITH A WEAPON, ACTIVE SHOOTER, AND/OR HOSTAGE SITUATION	POLICY #: 1399
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PURPOSE:

To provide an appropriate response in the event of an incident involving a person with a weapon, an active shooter or a hostage situation within the facility.

POLICY:

High Desert Health System will take all reasonable measures to minimize the negative impact of a situation involving a person with a weapon, an active shooter or a hostage.

DEFINITIONS:

Weapon: Any firearm, knife or instrument that can cause bodily harm or injury

Active Shooter: Person discharging a weapon

Hostage: Any person being threatened or held against their will

PROCEDURE:

A. Discovery

1. Anyone encountering a person brandishing a weapon should:
 - a. Seek cover and warn others of the situation.
 - b. Clear immediate danger area of all personnel and patients, if it is safe to do so.
 - c. Notify the operator x89555 of the incident with all known information.
 - Location - building, area, floor and room number.
 - Suspects - number and any physical descriptions.
 - Any known hostages or victims.
 - Any other relevant information (e.g., weapons, demands).
 - Law enforcement personnel authorized to carry a weapon should be identified if they are not in a distinctive uniform.

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2. The operator will:
 - a. Notify the facility via a public announcement of “Code Silver” or “Code Silver – Active Shooter” with location.
 - b. Notify the administrator, Sheriff, and Security of the incident.
 - c. Notify staff of the event via, e mail, overhead paging system other communication methods available to the facility.

3. Due to the nature of this incident, the operator will initiate a Code Silver and notify law enforcement via 9-1-1 without first seeking approval from the administrator.

B. Response (Code Silver)

1. Any staff members in the area specified by a Code Silver should:
 - a. Warn others of the situation
 - b. Evacuate if it is safe to do so.
 - c. Seek cover/protection,
 - d. Assist patients in seeking shelter/protection, if it is safe to do so
 - e. Remain calm and stay alert.
 - f. If at all possible, don’t make contact with the perpetrators.

2. Patients in the area specified by a Code Silver should be instructed:
 - a. to remain calm and stay alert.
 - b. not to make contact with the shooter.
 - c. evacuate, if possible and safe to do so, at the direction of area staff members.

3. Any staff members in an area distant from the Code Silver location should:
 - a. Stay away from the location specified in the Code Silver. *This is an extremely dangerous and sensitive situation that should only be handled by trained authorities.*
 - b. Close all doors including exit doors.
 - c. Take cover behind locked doors if possible.
 - d. Provide assistance as requested by an authorized person.

C. Hospital Command Center (HCC)

1. The administrator by policy, assumes the role of the incident commander or delegates the responsibility to the most qualified individual.
2. The incident commander activates the Hospital Command Center (HCC) in a location not affected by the incident.

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- g. If the incident commander works outside of the Incident Command Post (ICP), a deputy incident commander is appointed within the HCC.
 - h. If the incident commander works inside of the HCC, a liaison officer is assigned to the Law Enforcement's Incident Command Post (ICP).
 - i. A "Unified Command" with the law enforcement incident commander is established.
3. The incident commander appoints the appropriate command and general staff, who will, in turn, assign appropriate personnel to HICS positions needed to accomplish the incident's objectives.

D. Law Enforcement Arrival

1. When law enforcement arrives, the Code Silver becomes a law enforcement incident and they assume full responsibility for managing the situation. Law enforcement will request and expect cooperation and assistance from the staff.
2. Law enforcement will need a copy of the facility's layout, indicating rooms, exits, windows, utility access, keys and access cards.
3. Law enforcement will establish an incident command post in a location of their choosing, most likely outside the facility and away from the incident.
4. Response:
 - j. It is important for anyone in the affected area to show their hands at all times when law enforcement is on scene. This helps law enforcement officers to identify who may or may not be armed with a weapon.
 - k. Follow law enforcement instructions as they are given. Understand that law enforcement officers may be yelling and may seem aggressive.
 - l. Verbally identify yourself.
 - m. If you are injured, tell law enforcement you are injured and state whether or not you require immediate medical attention.
 - n. Leave all personal belongings during the evacuation process. It is more important to get to safety first

E. Media

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1. The Public Information Officer (PIO) will contact families of identified hostages, in conjunction with Law Enforcement, and serve as a liaison with the media.
2. Law enforcement will request that any and all official statements of the facility be discussed with the designated law enforcement representative before being released.
3. All media coverage is directed by the PIO. Staff must avoid giving out any information to the media. Media representatives may be quite assertive and some may not display official identification. The incident should not be discussed openly among the staff. Protection of privacy is extremely important.

F. All Clear

1. After consultation with law enforcement the incident commander authorizes an "all clear" notification to the operator indicating the termination of response operations.
2. The operator announces "Code Silver, all clear" three (3) times via the overhead paging system, or other approved notification system.
3. All employees are to return to normal operations.

G. After Action Report

1. Be prepared to spend time with the law enforcement authorities to review the incident in detail.
2. Provide details of the perpetrators, victims, incident scene and events leading up to the initial trigger point of the incident.
3. Facility administrators, staff and public safety first responder groups must meet within a 24-48 hour time frame after the conclusion of the incident to review the incident from start to finish. The goal of the debriefing is to determine what actions, policies and procedures could be enhanced to better respond to a future Code Silver incident. This debriefing is to determine the how and why, not to assign blame. The goal is to understand what happened and how to be better prepared to respond to any future event.
4. Management conducts a root cause analysis or similar review of the incident to identify areas for improvement and then implement those action items

H. Mental Health Considerations

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Mental health evaluations for employee & non-employee victims: Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a significant and debilitating disorder that affects victims of and responders to violent events such as an active shooter or hostage event. It is strongly recommended that all affected persons be required to complete an initial PTSD evaluation by a mental health professional to determine if continued therapy is required and for what duration of time the therapy is to continue. The evaluation will also include a physical component to determine what effect if any the stress is having on the person's physical well-being. All persons involved in the event should be provided a written evaluation with the mental health professional's recommendation for a return to duty date.

I. Education and Training

1. Training and education ensure that all staff is aware of potential security hazards and how to protect themselves and their co-workers through established policies and procedures.
2. Training for staff includes what to do when they become a hostage or victim such as the following:
 - **Remain calm and be patient.** Time is on your side. Avoid drastic action. The captors in all probability do not want to harm persons held by them, however such direct challenges may cause the captor to escalate his actions.
 - **The initial 45 minutes are the most dangerous.** Follow instructions, be alert. Your focus is on staying alive. Don't make mistakes that could hazard your well-being.
 - **Don't speak unless spoken to and only when necessary.** If it is necessary to speak with the captors, avoid appearing hostile, avoid arguments and don't talk down to him or her. Maintain eye contact with the captor but do not stare. If medications, first aid or restroom privileges are needed by anyone, say so.
 - **Be Compliant.** Treat the captor like royalty. Comply with instructions the best you can. Expect the unexpected. Displaying a certain amount of fear can possibly work to your advantage.
 - **Be Observant.** When you are released, or when you escape, the personal safety of others may depend on what you remember about the situation.

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I. REFERENCES

California Code of Regulations, Title 22, §70743 (a)(b)(c)(d). §70746.

Guidelines for Preventing Workplace Violence for Health Care and Social Service Workers, 3148 (1998); U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

The Hospital Incident Command System (HICS) Guidebook, accessible via the Internet at www.emsa.ca.gov/HICS.

The Joint Commission, www.jcrinc.com/Joint-Commission-Requirements.

Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Independent Study Course: *Active Shooter, What can you do (IS907)*, accessible via the Internet at <http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/IS907.asp>

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