



PHYSICAL SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS FOR HEALTHCARE AND PUBLIC HEALTH FACILITIES



Hospitals and healthcare facilities face a unique set of challenges in today's dynamic threat landscape. Incidents of violence often have no patterns when it comes to victim selection or method, creating an unpredictable and quickly evolving situation that can lead to loss of life and injury. Numerous factors associated with hospital and healthcare environments complicate traditional response to active assailant incidents, including the "duty-to-care," also known as "duty-to-act," availability of resources and procedures, and varying levels of patient mobility and needs. Additionally, staff must consider response planning for patients that require the greatest allocation of resources, as well as the unique characteristics within the hospital and healthcare environment.

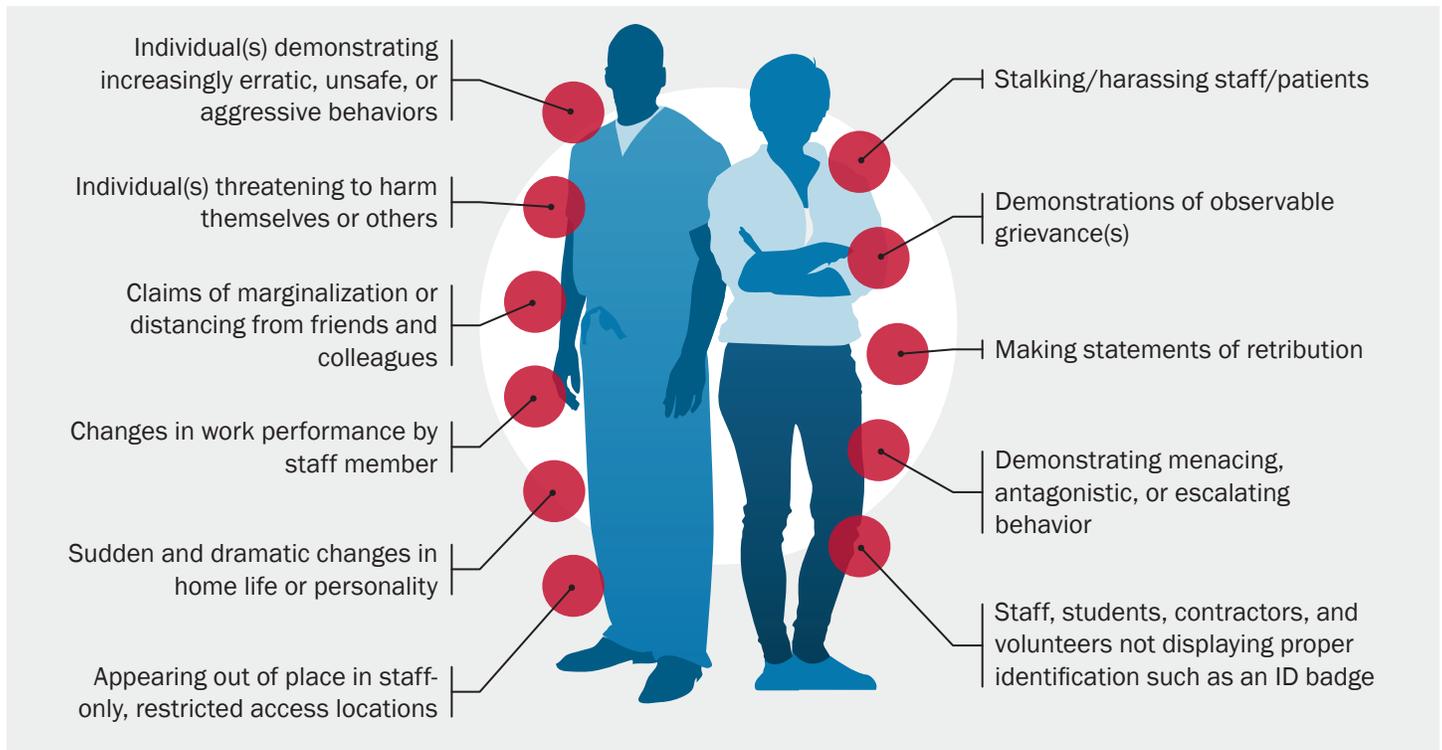


POTENTIAL WARNING SIGNS



The inherently open nature of many healthcare and public health facilities presents challenges to mitigating the threat from active assailant incidents and other acts of violence. Since active assailant incidents may occur with little or no warning, an effective response requires significant deliberate planning and preparation, taking into account the facility's vulnerabilities, mission, culture, risk tolerance, and available resources.

Potential warning signs that may be demonstrated by staff, patients, visitors, students, contractors, and/or volunteers could include but are not limited to the following examples:



Some activities and behaviors may be constitutionally protected and should be reported only when there are articulable facts to support a rational conclusion that the behavior is suspicious or an indicator of potential violence. Do not report based solely on protected activities, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or a combination of only such factors.

MITIGATION STRATEGIES AND PROTECTIVE MEASURES



Due to the unpredictable nature of violent incidents in healthcare facilities, it is critical to take proactive preparedness steps. Planning should consider the specific characteristics of the healthcare and public health facility, as well as include collaboration with local law enforcement and other first responders to help determine mitigation options. Plans should be dynamic and adaptive to changes that may occur. All emergency preparedness plans should seek to maximize the protection of staff, visitors, and patients.

PHYSICAL SECURITY



- Select optimal shelter-in-place locations (e.g., thick walls, solid doors with locks, minimal interior windows, first-aid emergency kits).
- Implement facility-wide alert notification system, complete with plain text, electronic hospital signage, and Public Announcement (PA) system alerts.
- Post signage identifying emergency exit and entry points, first-aid locations, and safe-rooms (if applicable).
- Share detailed facility layout with local first responder units and law enforcement by installing first responder kits at entrances to various wings, complete with hospital maps, key cards, and two-way radios.
- Consider designating safe location(s) (often described as “safe rooms”) in critical areas of facility.
- Establish facility access controls, especially in the most vulnerable areas of the facility.

ACCESS, PLANNING, AND PERSONNEL



- Develop Emergency Action and Notification Plan(s).
- Establish a Threat Assessment and Management Team to receive and review reports of potential warning signs of workplace violence; report suspicious behavior to security officials.
- Perform pre-employment screening and periodic background checks on staff.
- Conduct personnel safety/security training with staff, including de-escalation training.
- Monitor credential systems, access control and badges; install badge-access checkpoints to prevent tailgating.
- Conduct active assailant exercises at least annually.
- Evaluate lockdown procedures, considering access and functional needs of patients, visitors, and staff.
- Ensure early, consistent coordination with local law enforcement; request initial site assessment; institute an annual walk-through with local law enforcement.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR HEALTHCARE AND PUBLIC HEALTH SECTOR STAKEHOLDERS

For direct regional support, visit: cisa.gov/topics/physical-security and/or cisa.gov/about/regions/security-advisors

For additional resources, products, and information regarding the security of public gathering locations, please visit: cisa.gov/securing-public-gatherings

For additional tools and resources to assist with identifying and reporting suspicious activity, please visit: cisa.gov/conflict-prevention

For additional resources and tools to mitigate insider threats, please visit: cisa.gov/insider-threat-mitigation