Bomb threat leads to evacuation of Guam hospital

A phoned in bomb threat led to the partial evacuation and lockdown of Guam’s only civilian hospital last month, forcing the facility to activate its response plans.

An unidentified caller to the island’s 911 system on the afternoon of December 16 asked for the call to be transferred to Guam Memorial Hospital, then threatened to set off a bomb in the facility. Hospital administrators immediately reported the threat to police. There were approximately 160 patients in the hospital at the time.

Per the hospital’s bomb threat response policy, visitors, dozens of non-essential staff and patients whose medical conditions allowed were evacuated. Others remained inside while police swept the building. Not all staff heard the initial code call, such as those who were working in CT at the time, and they were notified by other employees. Police found no bomb-related materials and gave the all-clear about one hour later. (Sources: Pacific News Center, Pacific Daily News, KUAM News)

The week before, a bomb threat was called in to the emergency department (ED) of United Hospital in St. Paul, Minnesota. Neither that hospital nor the children’s hospital that adjoins it was evacuated, but ambulances were diverted and the EDs were locked down while police searched the area. Nothing was found. (Source: St. Paul Pioneer Press)

ACTION STEPS

Develop written policies for what information employees may
communicate to patients and visitors in the event of a bomb threat or similar security emergency. Regularly review these policies with staff. (Sources: Pacific News Center, Muhlenberg Community Hospital)

Update bomb threat response procedures annually and maintain a bomb threat kit that includes current facility blueprints and floor plans, phone lists, lights sticks, pads and pencils to help your security team coordinate with law enforcement. (Source: California Hospital Association)

Make sure your facility has a plan for using non-electronic communication methods during a bomb threat scenario since case electronic signals can potentially detonate bombs. Practice these methods during drills to ensure that all staff receive needed information. (Source: Kansas Department of Health and Environment)

UPCOMING EVENTS

THURSDAY

08 Archery Trade Association Annual Trade Show Indiana Convention Center & Lucas Oil Stadium

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