

# Emergency Preparedness General Response



This pamphlet outlines general responses to emergencies at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center and immediate campus. Department specific plans may vary. It is important that employees are aware of procedures for their area.

Fire	Bomb Threat/Suspicious Package
Medical Emergency	Missing Patient
Hazardous Spill/Odor	Missing Child
Evacuation	Active Threat
Systems Interruption/Failure	Severe Weather
Security/Behavior	Mass Casualty/Internal Event
Oxygen Shut-off	

Emergency  
Number on VA  
Property: 1-911

## **Severe Weather**

**Notification:** VANS Alert and/or Overhead Page of '**Severe Weather, (description, instructions)**'.

**Response:**

- Patient care areas will move patients away from windows.
- Patients that cannot be moved should be covered with extra blankets, sheets, and pillows to protect from possible flying debris.
- All other personnel shall return to their departments and move to safe areas (i.e. interior rooms, corridors without windows).
- All atriums and glass areas will be evacuated and closed.
- The VA Police will notify and assist occupants in Bldg 68 to evacuate into Bldg 70.

## **Mass Casualty / Internal Event**

**Notification:** VANS Alert and/or Overhead Page of '**Emergency Event, employees log into VistA or VA email for additional information**'.

**Response:**

- Refer to unit specific and/or Medical Center Emergency Operations Plan. Certain departments/positions have pre-assigned roles;
- If you are not in one of these roles, continue as usual until directed otherwise;
- Facility has a 3 level plan:
  - Level 1 up to 5 patients;
  - Level 2 up to 50 patients;
  - Level 3 over 50 patients.

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## **Fire (CODE RED)**

**Notification:** Audible alarms, flashing lights, VA Notification System (VANS) Alert and/or Overhead Page of '**CODE RED, Fire Alarm, (location)**'.

### **Response:**

Upon detection of smoke and/or fire:

- Call 1-911 and/or Pull nearest pull station;
- Then follow the **R-A-C-E** Plan:
  - **R**escue anyone in imminent danger;
  - **A**larm others in the area; do not hesitate to activate alarm pull boxes!
  - **C**ontain the fire by closing doors;
  - **E**xtinguish, only if safe to do so or **E**vacuate.
- Magnetic door locks will automatically open in affected areas;
- VANS/Telephone operators will page the "All Clear".

## **Medical Emergency (CODE BLUE)**

**Notification:** VANS Alert, digital pagers and Overhead Page of '**CODE BLUE, (location)**'.

### **Response:**

- Call 1-911 immediately;
- Tell the operator the nature of the emergency;
- Tell the operator the specific location of the emergency (e.g. 3F room 137);
- Send individual to hallway to meet and direct the response team;
- Send someone else to retrieve the crash cart/stretchers if needed.

## **Missing Patient / Missing Child**

**Notification:** VANS Alert and/or Overhead Page of '**Missing Patient, employees log into VistA or VA email for additional information**' or '**Missing Child, (short description), employees log into VistA or VA email for additional information**'.

### **Response:**

- Call 1-911 immediately;
- Conduct Preliminary Search of nearby wards, clinics, offices, lobbies, stairwells, Veterans Canteen and smoking shelter;
- If Preliminary Search is unsuccessful, VA Police initiate facility wide search and make Missing Patient/Child announcement;
- For Missing Child, VA Police will determine if exits are to be secured but staff should pay special attention to adults with children near exits to their area or the building;
- Notify VA Police as soon as patient/child has been located.

## **Active Threat**

**Notification:** VANS Alert and Overhead Page of '**Active Threat, (location, description of threat, immediate actions to take)**'.

### **Response:**

- Call 1-911, activate silent alarm and/or vocally warn of the threat in your area;
- For 1-911 calls, provide best description of threat (location, weapon type, direction of travel, etc.);
- Make decision to **Evacuate** the area, **Evade** by sheltering in place or **Engage** and stop the threat;
- **Entire Facility:** Immediately bring patients, other staff and visitors behind a closed door and lock if possible or barricade the door with furniture, hide under desks or behind furniture.
- Entire Facility: When Law Enforcement arrive to clear and secure your area, get down on the ground and comply with all directions.

## Oxygen Shut-Off

**Notification:** VANS Alert and/or Verbal Notification to affected area(s).

**Response:**

- Charge nurse is responsible for shut off;
- In the event of a fire:
  - Switch patients to E cylinder oxygen;
  - Begin in rooms nearest the fire;
  - If the fire is not immediately extinguished, switch remaining patients to E cylinder oxygen;
  - After patients are removed from fixed oxygen, the main oxygen shut off valve should be turned off.

## Bomb Threat / Suspicious Package

**Notification:** VANS Alert, Verbal Notification and/or Overhead Page to affected area(s) of '**Emergency Event, employees log into VistA or VA email for additional information**'.

**Letter/Package Response:**

- Handle as briefly as possible;
- Call 1-911;
- Inform Supervisor;
- Evacuate and/or secure the area.

**Phone Call Response:**

- DO NOT PANIC;
- Keep caller on line; ask him/her to repeat message;
- Record message if possible, or write information about call;
- Have co-worker call 1-911 to report the threat and notify supervisor;
- After call, give details to VA Police;
- Await directions from the VA Police.

## Hazardous Spill / Odor

**Notification:** VANS Alert and Overhead Page of '**Internal (Spill / Odor), employees please log into VistA or VA email for additional information**'.

**Spill Response:**

- Call 1-911;
- Contain the spill and remove injured personnel only if safe to do so (e.g. close door);
- Alert others in the immediate area;
- Evacuate area until the situation is under control;
- Stand by to provide information to emergency responders.

**Odor Response:**

- Call 1-911 and report location;
- Alert others in the immediate area;
- Evacuate area, if necessary, until the situation is under control;
- Stand by to provide information to emergency responders.

## Evacuation

**Notification:** VANS Alert, Verbal Notification and/or Overhead Page to affected area(s) of '**Emergency Event, employees log into VistA or VA email for additional information**'.

**Response:**

- Review department specific plans on emergency management website.
- Evacuation Options directed by your supervisor:
  - **Shelter-in-Place:** No evacuation. Stay where you are;
  - **Horizontal Evacuation:** Move to a safer place on the same floor;
  - **Vertical Evacuation:** Move to a safer place on a different floor;
  - **Total Evacuation:** Completely leave the building.

## Systems Interruption / Failure

**Notification:** VANS Alert, Verbal Notification and/or Overhead Page to affected area(s) of '**System interruption, (details, and employee actions)**'.

### **Communication Systems:**

- **Computer Systems**
  - Contact IRM at ext. 4357;
  - Use backup manual/paper systems.
- **Telephones & Pagers**
  - Contact IRM at ext. 4357;
  - Use overhead paging, portable phones, radios, or runners as needed.

### **Patient Systems Failure:**

- **Nurse Call System Fails**
  - Call **Biomed** ext. 2579 (M-F: 7am-4:30 pm);
  - **AFTER HOURS & Weekends** Call ext. 2626;
  - If necessary move patient to areas with working call system;
  - Detail a runner to frequently check on patients.
- **Patient Care Equipment or Systems Fail**
  - Call **Biomed** ext. 2579 (M-F: 7am-4:30 pm);
  - **AFTER HOURS & Weekends** call ext. 2626;
  - Take appropriate clinical intervention.
- **Overhead Zone Paging Fails**
  - Call **Biomed** ext. 2579 (M-F: 7am-4:30 pm);
  - **AFTER HOURS & Weekends** call ext. 2626;
  - Use telephones, pagers and/or runners as needed.

## Utilities Failure:

- **Call: Facilities Engineering at ext. 2626**
- **Electrical Power Fails**
  - Use red outlets.
- **Medical Gases**
  - Hand ventilate, transfer patients;
  - Use portable O2 from SPS (ext. 2532).
- **Medical Vacuum**
  - Call SPS for portable (ext. 2532).
- **Natural Gas Leak**
  - Evacuate and then call 1-911.
- **Steam, water, sewer, ventilation, heat**
  - Take appropriate actions / clinical interventions.

**NOTE:** See your service-specific emergency plan for the management of utility outages in your Service, Department, or PSL.

## Security / Behavior Incident

**Notification:** VANS Alert and/or Verbal Notification to affected area(s).

### **Response:**

- Call 1-911 or activate panic alarm;
- Comply with all demands;
- DO NOT try to disarm suspect;
- Evacuate affected area(s), if safe;
- Employee(s) who experience violence report to Occupational Health and/or Emergency Department.