

Fire! Are you prepared? Challenges in a High-Rise Hospital.

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Background

SMCS campus covers 6-7 square city blocks with a 1.36M square footage blue print. We have three multi story buildings with multiple access points. Responding to and addressing a structure fire has significant complications for SMCS and the Sacramento Fire Department. It was important to simulate a large scale event to address the potential challenges, review access points, and test Fire Safety features. The Joint Commission requires the hospital to have a specific fire response plan and to test these responses with drills (The Joint Commission 2019). A drill of this magnitude has never been conducted with the Sacramento Fire Department (SFD) in our region.

Purpose

On August 22, 2022 SMCS in conjunction with 5 SFD engine companies, conducted a large-scale fire drill on the 7th floor of the WCC building. This exercise was done to prepare for the potential event of a real fire in a patient care area with patient and staff involvement. 2-3 people, with several newborn isolettes were found in the patient care area where the fire was located. Conducting this drill with the SFD allowed us to test egress locations, access water and attempt patient rescue into the fire stairways. Staging this event with our Plant Operations (POM) team allowed us to test fire alarms as well as doors, audible alarms, visual strobes and other components that are designed to alert occupants of an emergency.

Methods

- A fire drill was conducted.
- Joint planning with our Emergency preparedness team, plant operations and SFD leadership to create fire scenario that would uncover vulnerabilities.
 - Only selected leaders were aware of drill to allow for real time responses.
 - Fire crews responded from their fire house, which allowed a real time response.
 - Lock box keys were used to access stairwell and water supply
 - Hoses were attached to water access and activated.
 - Security, Nursing Supervisors and POM also responded in real time.



Sutter Health Key Result

Safety

Results and observations

- Clear communication with the PBX operator to notify 911, Informacast and announce overhead page
- POM arrived to manage loss of other utilities (elevators, Steam, Power, Medical gas, and HVAC)
- Resources and appropriate staff responded and understood their roles
- Security involved to mitigate traffic and monitor egress
- Nursing supervisor aware to initiate
- Tactical channel was not effective, consider SFD getting their own direct channel.

References

The Joint Commission Fire Protection – Clinical Impact. The Joint Commission.
<https://www.jointcommission.org/resources/the-physical-environment/fire-protection/clinical-impact/>. 2019.

Acknowledgements

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Learn More

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