Risk Mitigation for Hospitals After Afghanistan Attack

On March 8, four men killed at least 30 people and wounded more than 50 at the Sardar Daud Khan military hospital in Kabul, Afghanistan, using tactics indicative of premeditation after foreign terrorist calls to strike hospitals in the West. ISIS later claimed responsibility.

- The attackers detonated at least one suicide vest at the hospital’s rear entrance. Western media indicates the attackers were disguised as medical personnel, allowing them to access multiple floors while using automatic rifles and grenades to cause mass fatalities. All four men died after a seven-hour standoff with Afghan security forces.

NJOHSP encourages hospital owners and staff to implement these risk mitigation measures:

- **Screen hospital staff and visitors to prevent disguised entry, unauthorized access, and insider threats.** Hospital staff should have valid, hospital-issued identification displayed at all times. Management should establish security checkpoints at all publicly accessible entrances—requiring patients, visitors, and staff to be screened upon entry. Visitors, including third-party vendors, should also be required to present identification and be escorted through restricted areas.

- **Use video surveillance to monitor all entrances and restricted areas, while conducting regular patrols to identify unauthorized personnel, tampering, or forced entry.** Hospital owners should control access to non-public entrances via a secure locking mechanism and work with law enforcement to conduct random explosive detection canine searches—including in parking areas.

- **Develop an active-shooter response and emergency communications plan.** Hospital owners should ensure active-shooter response plans align with their local law enforcement agency’s procedures. They should develop an emergency communication plan to alert hospital staff, patients, and visitors of an active-shooter situation.

- **Educate hospital staff, patients, and visitors on how to detect and report suspicious activity.** Hospital owners should develop an awareness campaign focused on indicators of suspicious behavior and terrorist surveillance. NJOHSP can provide *See Something, Say Something* materials for display at hospital facilities.
NJOHSP Resources

Security Assessments and Training

NJOHSP can facilitate physical security assessments in coordination with county infrastructure coordinators, regional mitigation planners, and local law enforcement. NJOHSP also offers training, including active shooter preparedness and response training.

New Jersey Suspicious Activity Reporting

To report suspicious activity in New Jersey, dial 1-866-SAFE-NJ or email tips@njohsp.gov. If there is an emergency, dial 9-1-1. Visit www.njohsp.gov/report to learn more about suspicious activity reporting.

Hospital Security Best Practices

The Healthcare Industry Sector Security Assessment and Best Practices Report provides the Hospital Security Readiness Assessment Tool, security best practices, and additional resources to evaluate and improve physical security at hospitals in New Jersey. To access the report, contact NJOHSP at preparedness@njohsp.gov.