

9.4. Competency-Based Training Program Development. Training, education and exercises must meet the unique needs of the facility and the community in which it resides. The activities must also be tailored to develop the knowledge, skills and abilities of the various target audiences.

9.4.1. *Organizational Competencies.* The overall objectives that guide the organization's response to and recovery from emergencies include:

- Continuity of patient care operations.
- Safety of patients, visitors and staff.
- Support to the community and the Nation.
- Preservation of vital records and property.

9.4.2. *Target Audiences and Job Group Competencies.* Four target audience job groups have been identified along with a set of primary competencies that VAMCs and VISNs can use as a basis for their training needs assessments.

These include:

- All employees
- Facility Leaders
- Patient Care Providers
- Emergency Program Managers

All employees play a role in the emergency response setting, even if it is simply to maintain or enhance current operations for patients within the system and to anticipate and prepare for increased demands resulting from the emergency situation. Expectations of facility personnel can more easily be addressed by the emergency plan and response process by dividing all personnel into the four job groups noted above. These four job groups incorporate levels of training that progressively increase with level of responsibility. The expectations, functions and responsibilities of each of these groups are addressed below.

9.4.2.1. All Employees Job Group - Includes all personnel with assigned job positions within the Emergency Operations Plan and supervisory staff who may be required to perform the duties of an initial Incident Commander. The competencies within this group are referred to as *core competencies* necessary as a base for every position within the organization. Emergency response and recovery competencies for this job group include:

- Utilize general Incident Command System (ICS)/Incident Management System (IMS) principles during incident response and recovery.
- Recognize situations that suggest indications for full or partial activation of the healthcare facility's Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), and report them appropriately and promptly.
- Participate in healthcare facility mobilization to rapidly transition from day-to-day operations to incident response organization and processes.
- Apply the VHA core mission statement to actions taken during emergency response and recovery.

- Apply the VHA Code of Ethics (vaww1.va.gov/vhaethics/download/code.doc) to actions taken during emergency operations.
- Execute personal/family preparedness plans to maximize availability to participate in the facility's emergency response and recovery.
- Respond with pre-prepared and maintained personal "go-kit" to maximize the ability to perform and maintain assigned role during VHA response and recovery.
- Follow the occupant emergency procedures and assist others (VHA personnel, patients, visitors, etc.) as necessary to accomplish the directives.
- Perform specific roles and responsibilities as assigned in the VHA facility's Emergency Operations Plan (EOP).
- Follow the communication plan and reporting requirements as outlined in the facility's EOP and the specific Incident Action Plan for an emergency event.
- Follow and enforce VHA safety rules, regulations and policies during emergency response and recovery.
- Follow and enforce security measures consistent with the nature of the incident that has prompted the EOP activation.
- Utilize or request (as appropriate) and integrate equipment, supplies and personnel for employee's specific role or functional area during emergency response and recovery.
- Follow demobilization procedures that facilitate rapid transition to recovery operations for the healthcare facility.
- Follow recovery procedures that ensure facility return to baseline activity.

9.4.2.2. Facility Leaders Job Group - Includes VAMC and VISN Directors and key operating unit managers. These individuals, due to their everyday organizational positions, would be assigned to serve on the Incident Management Team (ICS command and general staff positions) during emergency response and recovery. Emergency response and recovery competencies for this job group include:

- Identify specific criteria of potential events that require the full or partial activation of the facility Emergency Operations Plan (EOP).
- Activate or support activation of full or partial Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) for appropriate events.
- Ensure rapid facility mobilization that transitions day-to-day activities into incident response organization and processes.
- Ensure that the facility's incident management is effective, utilizes Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) procedures and processes, and uses a proactive *management by objective* approach.
- Manage continuous incident planning through iterative planning cycle procedures that provide strategic and general tactical guidance to facility personnel.
- Manage efficient information processing regarding response activities.

- Provide information on the facility's emergency response and recovery activities to patients, patient families, facility personnel families, media and the general public, as appropriate.
- Monitor the response and recovery needs of the facility's functional areas; and, if needed, provide support with additional facilities, equipment, communications, personnel or other assistance.
- Establish appropriate measures to document, track or reimburse financial costs associated with facility response and recovery.
- Manage facility response so that it adheres to appropriate regulations and standards or seek relief as required.
- Ensure that business continuity program considerations are incorporated into the facility Incident Action Planning (IAP) process.
- Ensure rapid and effective demobilization of facility emergency response during the transition to recovery operations.
- Ensure recovery is accomplished to restore facility to base line operations and to capture important lessons learned.

9.4.2.3. Patient Care Providers Job Group - Includes physicians, physician assistants, registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, nurses working within expanded roles (RNA, RNP and others), respiratory therapists and others who provide direct clinical patient care. It does not include clinical support staff that provide patient care services under the direct supervision of patient care providers (e.g., aids and technicians). Emergency response and recovery competencies for the patient care providers job group include:

- Recognize situations related to patient care that indicate the need for full or partial activation of the healthcare facility's Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), and report them appropriately and promptly.
- Describe patient population profiles and other situation-based criteria (unusual numbers, very unusual contagiousness and other indication of increased risk to healthcare facility personnel or current patients, etc.) that indicate the possible need for activation of the EOP.
- Participate in the mobilization of clinical area to transition from day-to day operations into incident response organization and process.
- Follow the healthcare occupant emergency procedures for your specific clinical care areas by assuring protective actions for patients and staff and assisting others as necessary to accomplish the directives.
- Perform your clinical care duties in accordance with the facility's Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) and the appropriate Incident Action Plan (IAP) in order to support the facility's incident objectives.
- Provide Surge Capacity by managing/treating increased numbers of patients (compared with day-to-day activities), regardless of etiology.
- Provide Surge Capability by managing/treating all incoming patients with specialty needs that vary significantly from day-to-day facility activities.
- Provide for efficient information processing for your clinical area through both reporting and receiving information according to established time schedules.

- Manage the psychological impact on victims and victim families through both preventative and therapeutic measures.
- Incorporate relevant safety practices and procedures in all incident operations for your clinical area.
- Integrate outside resources into your clinical area as required to meet response objectives.
- Follow demobilization procedures for your clinical area that facilitate rapid transition to recovery operations for the healthcare facility.
- Follow recovery procedures for your clinical area that promote rapid return of the facility to baseline activity.

9.4.2.4. Emergency Program Managers Job Group - Include personnel primarily responsible for developing, implementing and maintaining VHA facility emergency management programs that include the Emergency Operations Plan. VHA Area Emergency Managers are also included in this job group. Emergency response and recovery competencies for this job group include:

- Recognize circumstances and/or actions across the program manager's jurisdiction, if appropriate, that indicate a potential incident; and report the situation to facility leadership and appropriate authorities.
- Provide guidance to VHA Facility Incident Managers and other authorities as requested on the decision to fully or partially activate Emergency Operations Plans (EOP).
- Assist in the rapid mobilization of activated VHA facilities to transition from day-to-day activities into response and recovery operations.
- Ensure full and proper execution of the appropriate VHA emergency operations plan (EOP) for designated VHA healthcare facilities during response and recovery.
- Demonstrate the ability to function as a VHA facility's Plans Chief within ICS/IMS structure as indicated by the Emergency Operations Plan (EOP).
- Perform or assist with the senior facility liaison function and ensure that relevant response and recovery information is exchanged with senior VHA management levels.
- Establish (as requested by facilities) senior liaison with all appropriate external (non-VHA) emergency response officials in areas of responsibility, conduct information exchange and coordinate incident response strategies and tactics.
- Participate in demobilization processes within the VHA facility and Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) to transition from VHA facility response to recovery operations.
- Assist with VHA facility recovery (in appropriate area as indicated by your position) to full pre-incident function, including return to routine facility management and medical care activities.
- Fulfill emergency management program requirements for formal incident After-Action Review (AAR), capture and processing of recommended changes, and organizational learning (by implementing accepted changes).

