

Outreach Programme on Building Resilient Healthcare Systems: Hospital Fire Safety and Disaster Management

Dates: 31st May 2025

1. Background:

In today's dynamic risk landscape, hospitals serve not only as centres of healing but also as critical lifelines during emergencies. From natural calamities and pandemics to fires and industrial accidents, healthcare institutions are increasingly confronted with complex, high-stakes situations. Among these, **fire hazards present a particularly urgent threat**, given the concentration of oxygen-rich environments, flammable chemicals, sophisticated electrical equipment, and patients with limited mobility.

Effective **hospital fire safety and incident response mechanisms** are essential to minimize damage, ensure the continuity of patient care, and protect lives. These mechanisms require a comprehensive approach: rigorous planning, periodic drills, multi-stakeholder coordination, deployment of advanced fire detection and suppression systems, and strong leadership during crisis scenarios.

Moreover, with hospitals playing a pivotal role during large-scale disasters, their internal safety and preparedness become crucial—not just for internal functioning but also for **supporting wider community resilience**.

2. Why It's the Need of the Hour:

The urgency for robust fire safety and disaster preparedness in hospitals stems from several compelling factors:

- **Rising Emergency Events:** The increasing frequency of disasters, both natural and man-made, highlights the necessity for healthcare facilities to be perpetually prepared. Fires can escalate rapidly, leading to irreversible loss of life and infrastructure if not managed efficiently.
- **Protection of Vulnerable Lives:** Hospitals house some of the most fragile members of society. Evacuating and protecting patients who are dependent on life-support or mobility aids requires pre-planned and specialized emergency protocols.
- **Regulatory Compliance and Risk Management:** With stricter health and safety regulations being enforced by national and international accreditation bodies, hospitals must integrate fire safety measures to meet compliance requirements, minimize liabilities, and maintain service quality.
- **Public Trust and Institutional Credibility:** Hospitals are seen as safe havens in times of crisis. Demonstrating strong preparedness bolsters public confidence and enhances the institution's reputation.

- **Resilience of Essential Services:** Disasters affecting hospitals can cause ripple effects on community health systems. Strengthening internal safety ensures that hospitals continue to serve as operational hubs during emergencies.

By embedding fire safety and disaster preparedness into the core of hospital management, institutions can protect patients, safeguard infrastructure, and emerge as resilient health partners in times of crisis.

3. Objectives of the Programme:

This training initiative is designed with the following key objectives:

- a. **Enhance Response Capabilities:** Equip healthcare professionals and support staff with the practical knowledge to detect fire risks, handle basic firefighting tools, and act swiftly during emergencies.
- b. **Design and Execute Emergency Protocols:** Enable participants to create and implement customized disaster response and evacuation plans that accommodate vulnerable patient populations and infrastructure constraints.
- c. **Build a Safety-First Culture:** Promote awareness on fire safety norms, conduct fire drills, implement risk assessments, and ensure compliance with safety audits and legal frameworks.
- d. **Encourage Scenario-Based Learning:** Use simulated emergency situations to provide hands-on experience in decision-making, communication, and team-based response strategies.

4. Target Participants:

The programme is designed for a diverse group of hospital professionals, including:

- Medical staff (doctors, nurses, technicians)
- Non-medical personnel (administrative staff, housekeeping, maintenance)
- Emergency response teams and security personnel

5. Pedagogy:

The training will follow a participatory, practical, and skill-based learning approach.

Key methodologies include:

- **Interactive Lectures & Expert Talks** – Foundational understanding of fire safety, disaster management, and hospital-specific vulnerabilities.
- **Hands-on Demonstrations** – Use of fire extinguishers, alarm systems, evacuation tools, and personal protective equipment.
- **Tabletop Exercises** – Scenario-based planning and coordination for hypothetical emergency situations.
- **Group Discussions & Feedback Loops** – Debrief sessions to reflect on learnings

and strengthen collective problem-solving.

- **Case Studies & Best Practices** – Review of real incidents and success stories from India and abroad.

6. Expected Outcomes:

By the end of the programme, participants will be able to:

1. Understand the significance of integrating fire safety into hospital disaster preparedness and its impact on patient safety, institutional resilience, and emergency response effectiveness.
2. Gain in-depth knowledge of hospital fire safety standards, the importance of fire safety audits, and the necessary compliance requirements mandated by national and international bodies.
3. Acquire hands-on experience in identifying fire hazards, using firefighting equipment, and executing evacuation procedures under real-time simulated conditions.
4. Conduct comprehensive risk assessments to identify potential hazards, develop hospital risk profiles, and recommend primary mitigation strategies to enhance institutional safety.

7. Programme Duration & Targeted Hospitals

Date: 31st May 2025

Duration: 1 day

Targeted Hospitals: Nadiad-General Hospital (Kheda District)
