



Disaster Mini Drill

Topic: Patient Surge

Leader Instructions: Use this guide to assess situations, engage your team, and ensure clear communication during a patient surge. Review questions in advance, identify the 'right' answers based on your hospital's protocols, and adjust the language or skip questions as needed. This tool is designed to spark discussions and improve preparedness.

Scenario: A multi-car accident involving a city bus and several passenger vehicles has occurred a few blocks from our hospital. Without prior EMS notification, patients are arriving on foot, by private vehicles, and via EMS transport. Injuries range from minor to severe, with some requiring immediate stabilization. Departments are experiencing a sudden surge in patient volume.

General Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What are the immediate priorities to address this surge in your area? ○ Are there specific challenges or delays we need to address? ○ Do you have the resources and staffing needed, or is additional support required? ○ Are there safety concerns we need to address for staff or patients?
Charge RNs & ECRNs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If you were the first to find out about this situation, who would you notify, and how? ○ Are staff assignments effective, or do adjustments need to be made? ○ How are we coordinating patient transfers or discharges with other units? ○ What concerns are being shared by EMS teams, and how can we address them?
Nursing Supervisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What is the overall staffing situation, and do we need to adjust assignments or call in additional staff? ○ How are we handling interdepartmental coordination for resources like beds, equipment, or transport? ○ What is the biggest challenge staff are reporting, and how can leadership help? ○ How are we ensuring timely communication and support for all affected departments?
Physicians/ Providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How can we identify stable patients who can be discharged, transferred, or moved to decompress the ED? ○ What are the most critical patient care priorities right now? ○ How can we ensure high-acuity patients are stabilized quickly while managing the overall patient load? ○ What adjustments can we make to streamline diagnostic or treatment decisions without compromising care?



Question Bank

How to Use the Question Bank:

- Replace or add to the provided questions on the front worksheet as needed.
 - Use these questions during huddles, debriefs, or training to encourage reflection and improve team readiness.
 - Focus on questions that resonate most with your hospital's protocols and priorities.
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General Preparedness Questions

- What are the immediate priorities to address this surge in your area?
 - Are there any specific challenges or delays we need to address?
 - Do you have the resources and staffing needed, or is additional support required?
 - Are there safety concerns we need to address for staff or patients?
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Basic Awareness

- How would you know there was a surge occurring in the hospital?
 - Who is your first point of contact in this situation?
 - Where would you look to find information about the event or situation?
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Policy and Procedure

- What number would you call to notify [specific role/team] about the surge?
 - Where would you find your department's surge response policy?
 - How does your hospital handle patient tracking during a surge?
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Scenario-Specific Questions

- If you were the first to find out about this situation, who would you notify, and how?
- What would you do if this surge happened during the night shift, weekend, or holiday?
- If we had advanced notice of an event, like 20 minutes before patient arrival, what could we do to make room?
- If we needed to expand beyond the emergency department, where would we go?

Pediatric-Specific:

- How many pediatric patients could we safely care for with our current resources (e.g., pediatric rooms, equipment, trained staff)?
 - If we needed to move pediatric patients out of the ED, where could we provide safe, age-appropriate care?
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Coordination and Communication

- Which departments or units could assist in decompressing the ED?
 - How would you handle communication with inpatient units to expedite discharges or transfers?
 - What strategies could you use to manage patient and visitor expectations in waiting areas?
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Decision-Making and Incident Command

- Does this situation meet the criteria for activating incident command?
 - Who needs to be notified about the decision to activate, and how will you communicate this?
 - What are the immediate objectives for the first 15-30 minutes of the response?
 - How will you ensure a smooth handoff of control when leadership arrives?
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Physicians

- What are the most critical patient care priorities right now?
 - How can we ensure high-acuity patients are stabilized quickly while managing the overall patient load?
 - How can you support nursing staff and residents in clarifying care plans or providing quick decisions?
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Reflection and Problem-Solving

- What can you do now to prepare for a future surge?
- If you identified a gap in the response, how would you address it or escalate it?





Disaster Mini Drill Hot Wash

Topic: **Patient Surge**

Leader Instructions: Use this template or your own to track follow-up actions and document your efforts. Keeping a record helps ensure improvements and demonstrates preparedness during evaluations or reviews.

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Findings:

1. What went well?

2. Opportunities for Improvement?

Follow-Up Actions:

- Action Item:
 - Responsible Party:
 - Deadline:

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 - Deadline:

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 - Responsible Party:
 - Deadline: