

Hospitals Safe from Disasters

Reduce risk, protect health facilities, save lives



**World Health
Organization**

Regional Office for South-East Asia

What is a 'hospital safe from disasters'?

The term "hospital" encompasses all health facilities - large or small, urban or rural, complex or primary care centers.

A hospital safe from disasters:

- will remain intact and not collapse in disasters, killing or injuring patients and staff;
- will continue to function, providing critical services when they are most needed;
- has contingency plans and a well-trained health workforce that is ready and able to deal with the health consequences of emergencies.

You can make a difference

Disaster-resilient hospitals and health facilities are everyone's right. They are also everyone's responsibility. Learn more about how you can contribute to achieving the goal of the World Disaster Reduction Campaign—to ensure that health facilities can meet the health and medical needs of a disaster-stricken population.



A scenario we can change!

Ten steps that can make a difference

- Recognize that disasters are health issues and that health services must remain operational.
- Plan for disaster-resilient hospitals from the beginning—at the planning and design stage.
- Draft, legislate and enforce safe building codes and standards.
- Make existing health services less vulnerable by identifying underlying risks.
- Raise awareness among national decision-makers.
- Prepare hospital emergency and contingency plans.
- Train the health workforce to deal with emergency health needs.
- Protect the entire health services network: blood banks, laboratories, supply warehouses, communication infrastructure and more.
- Educate yourself about what can be done to protect critical health facilities.
- Involve communities as agents of disaster risk reduction.

Make 'hospitals safe from disasters' everyone's responsibility!



In extreme cases, disasters destroy health facilities...

26 December 2004 Earthquake and Tsunami

- *Aceh, Indonesia*
 - 30 of the 240 health clinics were destroyed.
 - 77 others were damaged seriously and 40 suffered minor damages.
- *Sri Lanka*
 - 92 health facilities were destroyed. This included 35 hospitals.
- *Maldives*
 - One regular hospital, 2 atoll hospitals and 20 health centres were destroyed.
- *India*
 - 7 district hospitals, 13 primary health centres and 80 sub-centres were damaged in the southern Indian States of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, the Union Territory of Pondicherry and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands

26 January 2001 Gujarat (India) Earthquake

- A magnitude 7.7 earthquake destroyed 227 health facilities in 2001. The devastated area was rebuilt to international standards to make this critical infrastructure disaster-resilient.

But most often, they simply cannot function.

The result is the same: health services are unavailable when they are most needed.



Don't let hospitals become a casualty of disasters



The good news is . . .
with current knowledge and
strong political commitment,
we can make hospitals safe
from disasters!

A global call for action

The World Health Organization and its South-East Asia Regional Office are partnering with the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR) and the World Bank on the 2008-09 World Disaster Reduction Campaign, whose theme is **Hospitals Safe from Disasters**.

Over the next two years, countries at risk from natural disasters, international and national agencies, universities, professional associations and individuals will work to raise awareness of how and why we must protect this critical infrastructure.

Building and maintaining disaster-resilient health facilities was a priority set by 168 nations when they adopted the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA), calling for ensuring *“that all **new** hospitals are built with a level of resilience that strengthens their capacity to remain functional in disaster situations and implementing mitigation measures to reinforce **existing** health facilities, particularly those providing primary health care”*.

More information at:

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www.unisdr.org

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