

## Hospital Evacuation: The Experience, the Doctrine and Training

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Medical care systems are primarily focused on providing medical and organizational responses to emergencies. However, the doctrine of preparedness does not normally consider instances in which the healthcare providers and medical facilities themselves are affected by the emergencies.

In these instances, hospitals are requested to reduce any possible damage to patients while continuing to provide the necessary medical care. Under some circumstances, partial or full evacuation of the medical facility is required. During the last decade, Israel has experienced two instances in which psychiatric hospitals were evacuated due to emergency events. These hospitals did not have evacuation protocols or procedures. These instances substantiated the need for the development of generic evacuation protocol for hospitals in different emergency situations.

In 2012, the Ministry of Health Commission circulated recommendations and guidelines for hospital evacuation. These generic recommendations and guidelines need to be adapted by each hospital, followed by the approval of the hospital director. According to the guidelines, the evacuation protocol should include four main steps: decision to evacuate, preparation for evacuation, evacuation and rehabilitation.

Following these exercises, lessons were learned particularly pertaining to aspects of logistics and operations. In the future, hospitals will be obliged to identify, in advance, the specific means that are required in order to ensure evacuation of the hospital, such that, if needed, there will be a comprehensive list of all equipment necessary for each hospital. This list will be kept available at the hospital and at the Ministry of Health. This will enable quicker organization and effective assistance to be provided during the complex evacuation process indicative of hospitals. ■

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