

Hospital Safety Index at a Glance



The Hospital Safety Index is a rapid, reliable and low-cost tool that provides a snapshot of the probability that a hospital or health facility will continue to function in emergency situations. The assessment takes into account structural, nonstructural and functional factors, including the environment and the health services network to which it belongs.

Determining a health facility's safety score begins by applying the Safe Hospitals Checklist to evaluate 145 elements or areas of the facility. The resulting scores are weighted according to their relative importance to a hospital's ability to function in disaster situations. The overall score places the facility into one of three safety categories: High, Average or Low, helping health authorities determine which facilities most urgently require interventions.

Learn more about the Hospital Safety Index at www.paho.org/disasters.

What is a hospital safe from disasters?

A 'hospital safe from disasters' is a health facility whose services remain accessible and functioning, at maximum capacity and in the same facility, immediately following a large-scale disaster or emergency.

The term **hospital** is used in the fullest sense to refer to all health facilities—large or small, urban or rural—regardless of their level of complexity. Hospitals are **safe** when they enjoy the highest level of protection possible in the face of disasters and their access routes and critical services (drinking water supply, energy, communications and others) remain operational, guaranteeing that the facility can continue to function and absorb the additional demand for health care.

Hospitals safe from disasters should meet three criteria:

- The physical structure of the health facility remains standing and resists, with minimal damage, the impact of destructive natural hazards present in the area in which it is located (**life protection**).
- Health facilities and equipment perform in such a way that they suffer minimal damage and can continue to operate in the face of natural phenomena of major intensity (**investment protection**).
- A health facility can maintain or improve its delivery of health services as part of the health services network (**operational protection**).

Hospitals Safe from Disasters

Don't let them become casualties!



www.safehospitals.info

www.paho.org/disasters

www.who.int/hac

Hospitals Safe from Disasters

A Goal within our Reach



Regional Office of the
World Health Organization

Creating a National Safe Hospitals Program

Objectives

- Develop policies and norms for hospitals safe from disasters.
- Protect the lives of all occupants, the investment in the infrastructure, and the functionality of new health facilities and those identified as priority facilities in the health services network.
- Make existing national and international policies and norms on safe hospitals widely known and follow up their implementation on a regular basis.



Strategies and Activities

National and international policy agreements

- Promote political and legislative decisions to establish a safe hospitals program in the Ministry of Health, other health sector institutions and regional organizations.
- Make a wide variety of national disaster prevention and response agencies key partners in achieving this goal, which was set forth in the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005 - 2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters.



Develop and update norms and standards

- Develop a national legal framework on safe hospitals.
- Prepare building codes, norms and procedures, technical manuals, protocols and regulations that support the implementation of a national program on hospitals safe from disasters.



Actively involve other actors in these initiatives

- Identify other actors involved in developing and executing health investment projects (water, energy, finance, planning, emergency response committees, etc.).
- Develop scientific and academic programs around the topic of safe hospitals in universities, research centers, professional associations involved in construction and operation of health facilities, and others.

Incorporate protection criteria into new health infrastructure investment projects

- Identify and share information on health infrastructure projects that are underway for new hospitals or modifications to existing facilities.
- Apply disaster mitigation technical guidelines to the terms of reference for design, construction and operation for projects to build new health facilities.
- Establish independent mechanisms for supervision of infrastructure projects, involving qualified professionals who will work in close collaboration with the project execution team.
- Make full use of existing technical capacity in the area of hospitals safe from disasters, including WHO Collaborating Centers, universities and professional associations and the PAHO/WHO Disaster Mitigation Advisory Group (DiMAG).



Raise the level of safety of existing health facilities

- Carry out a functional vulnerability assessment of the health services network and identify priority health facilities.
- Beginning with priority health facilities, implement vulnerability reduction measures, taking into account available resources.
- Include aspects of vulnerability reduction in the accreditation, certification and licensing of health facilities.
- Generate studies on the cost-effectiveness of vulnerability reduction.

Strengthen preparedness for emergencies and disasters

- Prepare, test and update national, local and hospital disaster plans.
- Train the health workforce and staff from related sectors to improve the response capacity of health facilities.
- Ensure that essential resources are available for hospital disaster response.

Monitor the progress of the safe hospitals program

- Define criteria, requirements, goals and indicators for hospitals safe from disasters.
- Identify and designate selected health facilities as "model hospitals" to provide an incentive to develop safe hospitals programs.
- Promote public competitions to identify or develop techniques and measures to strengthen existing health facilities.
- Contribute to a regional knowledge base by collecting experiences.
- Exchange success stories and lessons learned among countries and regions.