



CLINICAL ALARMS

EDUCATIONAL FACT SHEET FOR ALL PHYSICIANS

As of January 1, 2016, The Joint Commission requires hospitals to have policies and procedures in place to reduce harm associated with clinical alarms by ensuring the safe and effective management of and response to clinical alarms. Physicians, including Residents/Interns, need to be educated on the purpose and proper operation of the alarm systems they are responsible for.*

KEY FACTS RELATED TO ALARM SAFETY:

- ▶ Alarm system safety has been established as a priority by organizational leadership.
- ▶ Appropriate use of clinical alarms is founded on evidence-based best practice/guidelines with input from medical staff, nursing staff and clinical leaders.
- ▶ A risk assessment is utilized to identify alarm signals which have the most direct relationship to patient safety.
- ▶ As part of the inventory of clinical alarms for each patient care area, the audibility range for each alarm is listed.
- ▶ Clinical leaders/medical staff determine the default settings of physiologic monitors used within their unit/department.
- ▶ Alarm parameters are reviewed and can be customized to the patient by clinical staff based on the patient's clinical condition.
- ▶ Clinical alarms can be temporarily muted or disabled when the responsible practitioner remains in constant and direct one-on-one supervision of the patient and his/her associated equipment.
- ▶ Clinical alarm safety should be discussed during hand-off communication.
- ▶ Clinical staff should document the use of and communication with providers pertaining to clinical alarms according to their hospital procedure and documentation system.
- ▶ Patients and families need to be educated regarding the purpose and safe use of clinical alarms.
- ▶ Response to alarm signals is monitored.
- ▶ Incidents related to alarms are reviewed.

REFERENCES:

Northwell Health Clinical Alarms Policy

The Joint Commission National Patient Safety Goal.06.01.01: Improve the safety of clinical alarms

* Note: NPs/PAs are educated through the iLearn Learning Management System.