**PURPOSE**

This policy is intended to provide all staff specific guidance and instruction on how to initiate an emergency code within the hospital.

**POLICY OBJECTIVES**

The purpose of standardized, plain language emergency codes among South Carolina hospitals is to reduce variation and the potential for error among South Carolina hospital staff who may work or have privileges in more than one facility; and promote transparency of safety protocols for employees, patients and visitors.

**POLICY**

In the event of an emergency situation, a plain language emergency code will be used to notify the appropriate individuals to initiate an immediate and appropriate response based on the hospital emergency operations plan. The emergency code activation may or may not include widespread notification, based on the incident and established emergency procedures.

**PROCEDURES**

**INITIATING AN EMERGENCY CODE CALL**

When initiating an emergency code call, the [insert hospital name] employee should:

1. Initiate the notification process for the specific emergency, as outlined in the emergency operations plan;

2. Use the plain language code to reduce confusion; and,

3. Use the established code script.

   A. Facility Alert

      i. Decontamination: “Facility Alert + Decontamination + Location + Directions”
ii. Evacuation/Relocation: “Facility Alert + Evacuation + Location + Directions”
iii. Fire: “Facility Alert + Fire + Location + Directions”
iv. Hazardous Material Release: “Facility Alert + Threat + Location + Avoid the area”
v. Mass Casualty: “Facility Alert + Mass Casualty + Location + Directions”
vi. Utility/Technology Interruption: “Facility Alert + Utility/Technology Interruption + Location + Directions”
vii. Weather: “Facility Alert + Weather Event + Location + Directions”

B. Security Alert
i. Armed Subject: “Security Alert + Threat + Location + Directions”
ii. Bomb Threat: “Security Alert + Threat + Location + Directions”
iii. Civil Disturbance: “Security Alert + Civil Disturbance + Location + Avoid the area”
iv. Controlled Access: “Security Alert + Controlled Access + Location + Directions”
v. Missing Person: “Security Alert + Missing Person + Location + Directions”
vi. Security Assistance: “Security Alert + Security Assistance + Location + Directions”
vii. Suspicious Package: “Security Alert + Suspicious Package + Location + Directions”

C. Medical Alert
i. Medical Alerts: “Medical Alert + Medical Emergency + Location + Directions”

TERMINATING AN EMERGENCY CODE

A. Once the emergency situation has been effectively managed or resolved, and based on the emergency operations plan, the code should be cancelled. An indication of “all clear” should be sent to all that received the initial notification. This command should be repeated three times.

B. The cancellation notification should be sent via the same notification process as the initial code activation. For example, if an overhead paging system was used to activate the code, the overhead paging system should be used to cancel the code.

PROVIDING COMPETENCY-BASED STAFF EDUCATION

Competency-based education about the standardized, plain language emergency codes should be provided to all employees during employee orientation and reviewed during annual life-safety updates. Physicians, public safety officers and other contract employees also should be provided education. Education should include the following:

A. Three categories of alerts (Facility, Security, Medical);
B. Immediate steps for emergency code activation and notification of appropriate personnel based on the [hospital] emergency operations plan; and,
C. Specific responsibilities, based on their job description as written in the emergency operations plan.