

# San Diego Hospitals Prepare For Disaster

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SAN DIEGO — San Diego hospitals will take part in a statewide disaster exercise called operation Golden Guardian.

The disaster drill takes place every year, and this year the scenario is a terrorist attack with a highly radioactive bomb, called a dirty bomb.

At UCSD Hospital in Hillcrest, dozens of people will pose as victims who need treatment. Therese Rymer, the hospital's director of emergency preparedness, said in a disaster, a code sets the hospital in motion.

"What's activated is called a code triage, and when that happens all hospital pagers go off," she said.

UCSD trauma surgeon Jay Doucet said disasters make hospitals magnets for many people who may or may not need immediate care. He said handling mass casualties is a tremendous challenge.

"For instance in the wildfires we suddenly had 40 burn patients we wouldn't normally have had," said Doucet. "At the same time they lost about a third of their staff because they were being evacuated from their houses."

Vishal Bansal, another trauma surgeon said hospitals in San Diego are always on edge due to the risk of earthquake, wildfires, and possible accidents at the airport and military bases.

"There's always a possibility that an explosion could go off on one of the ships. Also, the possibility is we could have a plane crash because the airport is located right downtown," he said.

Jay Doucet said all hospitals are expected to have disaster plans, but disaster training is not a part of medical school curriculum or residency.

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