



**Children's Hospital**  
London Health Sciences Centre



# Code Yellow: Infant Abduction Exercise

Exercise Date: March 20, 2009

Preliminary Report April 15, 2009

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**Confidential**

# Executive Summary

**At 10:00 a.m. on Friday March 20, 2009 at London Health Sciences Centre a Code Yellow – Infant Abduction exercise was conducted. The exercise team included Clinical and Non-Clinical Internal staff along with an external observer and an external participant.**

**The purpose of the Code Yellow – Missing Infant/Abduction is to ensure prompt investigation and early recovery in the instance of a missing infant or an infant abduction.**

**The objective of the exercise was to test and review LHSC's emergency response procedures in responding to an Infant Abduction and to uncover any gaps in these procedures and responses.**

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# Overview of Results

- **Nursing staff started checking rooms quickly once the “Mother” alerted staff that her “baby” was missing and completed a thorough search of the floor.**
- **All staff were calm throughout the exercise while and worked with a sense of urgency.**
- **A very good description of the abductor was given to LHSC Security and the London Police Service. Police dispatch confirmed that at the time of the exercise a number of responding Police officers including Supervisory assistance would have been onsite within minutes.**
- **Non-clinical support response systems including LHSC Security Guards, Administrator On Call, Communicator On Call, and Switchboard worked well.**
- **The exercise was conducted in a safe manner with no injuries to participants and families on the floor were aware that an exercise was taking place.**
- **A good initial debrief took place after the exercise with comments from all involved.**

# A number of Challenges and gaps were uncovered

- After cutting off the security monitoring bracelet, the “abductor” was able to leave the wing, descend stairs and be outside in less than two minutes with the “baby”.
- A number of Clinical and Non-Clinical staff were of the understanding that cutting off the security monitoring bracelet would initiate alarms and a lockdown of the wing, this did not happen.
- Some issues with internal paging of the Emergency Notification System occurred.

# Next Steps

While an initial post exercise debrief occurred a number of steps will be needed to complete the objectives of this exercise.

- Post meetings and information gathering from participants and observers.
- A summary prepared and circulated.
- Feedback of corrections and comments on the summary are collected and the report is adjusted accordingly.
- An official tabletop debrief be conducted with an analysis of Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats (SWOT).
- A final action plan be struck and completed.

# Exercise Purpose

**The purpose of the Code Yellow – Missing Infant/Abduction is to ensure prompt investigation and early recovery in the instance of a missing infant or an infant abduction. Although not a common occurrence, infant abductions have occurred in Canadian, and more specifically, Ontario hospitals.**

**The risk of infant abduction generally comes from one of two sources, by a family member or estranged family member or by a non-family (stranger) offender.**

**In the event of a missing infant or infant abduction time is critical**

# Objectives

**London Health Sciences Centre is required through our accreditation process to conduct exercises in areas of high risk.**

**This exercise is to test and review LHSC's emergency response procedures in responding to an Infant Abduction and specifically the following:**

## **Response procedures of**

- Nursing staff
- Nursing Coordinator
- Security Dispatch
- Security Officers
- Switchboard
- Corporate Communications
- Administrator-On-Call

## **Equipment, Including**

- Infant Alarm System
- Door Alarms
- Communications

**This exercise is also to uncover any gaps in our procedures and response. The intent is also to enable the Emergency Measure Steering Committee and Exercise Leaders to conduct an analysis of Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats (SWOT)**

# Exercise Description

The exercise will involve a non family stranger abduction. This abduction will take place on the 7<sup>th</sup> Floor of Zone D at Victoria Hospital.

The abductor will not wish to harm the infant, only to have the infant as her own.

## Exercise Narrative:

**Pre-exercise:** Tuesday March 17<sup>th</sup> during the afternoon hours at approximately 03:00 p.m.

A female subject will be disguised as pregnant. This person will arrive on the unit alone asking questions around the unit practices, security measures and staffing. These will be probing questions. The subject will not be related to any patient on the floor.

# Expected Outcomes

1. **Female subject is reported by staff to Security. Security is not advised that the subject is part of a pre-exercise event. The outcome of security's actions will be measured as part of the overall response. (shift change, does the information get passed along the shifts, intelligence sharing)**
2. **The female subject is not reported to Security. This female will exit. The tape of the female being on site will be utilized in future for learning.**

**Female subject will depart immediately from the site after conducting probing exercise.**

## Exercise: Friday March 20, 2009 at 10:00 a.m

A mother is placed in a semi private room, with an infant (baby doll). The infant has an Infant Protection Program system applied. The team leader will be responsible for the care of the mother and baby during the initial few minutes. The mother requires using the washroom urgently post delivery. The team leader steps away from the room, informs staff that the mother and baby are tucked in and the mother attends the washroom. The mother remains in the washroom.

During this time, the female abductor is waiting in the Family Waiting Room. Once the abductor see's the team leave the area, she moves in to the semi private room. The infant is removed from the bassinet and departs the room. The infant is concealed in a tote style bag. The bag has baby blankets and toys in it. Before moving to an exit, the tag is removed with scissors. This sets off a "tamper" alarm which goes by pager to the unit staff on Mother Baby Unit. The abductor travels to the closest stairwell, number and exits the hospital.

# Ideal Expected Outcomes:

1. **Staff discovers the incident immediately as result of responding to a tamper alarm.**
2. **Mother indicates to nursing staff that baby is not with her and is gone**
3. **Staff calls 55555**
4. **The overhead announcement is provided**
5. **Emergency Measure Manager and Administrator-On-Call are text paged**
6. **The Security Dispatcher is connected with Police**
7. **A suspicious person is reported**
8. **Security attends and locates the women with the tote**
9. **The woman is compliant with Security and is arrested**

# Possible Outcomes

1. Staff do not respond to the tamper alarm
2. The mother attends the nursery to indicate that the baby is gone
3. Staff dial 55555 and hang up
4. The Security Dispatcher does not contact police
5. The overhead announcement is not made
6. Emergency Measure Manager and Administrator-On-Call are not text paged
7. Security may not move to obtain CCTV footage quickly
8. The crime scene may not be preserved
9. The suspect is able to depart with no description or vehicle information

# This type of incident is an Emergency Notification System 2 Activation

Key Leaders will be notified immediately in this type of event:

- Administrator On Call (will be made aware of Code Yellow Drill ahead of time)
- Security Coordinator (on site during the date)
- Security Manager
- Emergency Measures Manager
- Risk Management
- Communicator on Call

# What Went Well

- RN's started checking the room quickly
- 100/200 wing shut hall doors to better keep track of who was coming and going
- All staff seemed calm but with a sense of urgency
- It seems that an appropriate call was made to security after a quick check for the infant. (not sure of the timeliness of the call)
- Gave "good" description of abductor to security
- In the beginning staff help mom (actor) stay calm and feel reassured
- Once staff realized it was a mock exercise there was still good buy-in from staff to complete the drill as if it were real
- All wings did a very thorough search of the 7<sup>th</sup> floor
- A porter was stopped before getting on the elevator and staff looked under the stretcher he was pushing to ensure there was no baby leaving the floor
- The exercise was done safely; ie Coordinator let the families on the floor know that they were doing a safety exercise
- There was a good debrief post exercise with affected staff RN's, PSA's, Unit clerks, Security, Leadership, Risk Management, London Police, Safety Services, etc.
- Some thought this was real and not an exercise

# Code Yellow – Infant Abduction Exercise

## Timeline

