

Modern Emergency Department Enhances Training at CDP

FEMA's Center for Domestic Preparedness (CDP) reopened its hospital Emergency Department (ED) for training in late January. Five months after renovations began the 8,000 square foot area features expanded training space and improved technologies to enhance medical surge training for CDP students.

"We've expanded the emergency department and added about three times more space," said Candice Gilliland, senior healthcare instructor. "The students have more space for surge response. The old ED had the capability of treating four beds at once. The new trauma bay is the most significant change, although it adds an additional two bed capability, there is enough space to safely treat up to 10 patients, depending on how the students respond to a patient surge or large scale event."

The ED is part of the CDP's Noble Training Facility (NTF). The NTF integrated into CDP training in early 2007, and remains the nation's only hospital facility dedicated solely to preparing the healthcare, public health, and environmental health communities for mass casualty events related to catastrophic natural disasters or terrorist acts. More than 14,000 healthcare professionals have received NTF training.

Originally built in the 1970s, the ED serves as the focal point of training for healthcare courses at the CDP. The remodeled space offers an expanded trauma bay, modern treatment areas, sound and visual effect capabilities, hidden observation and control rooms, and a large waiting room. The larger space also includes triage stations, an ambulance entrance, hazmat isolation rooms, and a moulage area for role players.

"I trained here in October 2010," said Marston Kimerling, a returning healthcare student. "It seemed to be stressful and space was cramped. Students were running into each other, and most modern EDs offer more space. The old ED just made a hectic environment worse. The new ED is much larger and allows the team to realistically receive patients and control patient flow."

"The training environment you have here now provides a real feel of an emergency department atmosphere," said Robin Kerschner, a healthcare student who last trained at the CDP in April 2011. "Before the waiting room, trauma bay, and patient triage areas were essentially combined. It added confusion to an already escalating event based on the mass casualty scenario. This is more realistic, and has a much better flow similar to an actual ED."

Behind two-way glass, simulation technicians control human patient simulators and students respond to symptoms. "These control rooms allow technicians to inject patient symptoms based on the injuries and scenario. Our patient simulators resemble actual patients and basically act human, all the while, a person controls the behavior behind glass," said Robi Mobley, patient simulator specialist. "Before the renovations our simulation technicians were just another person adding to a crowded trauma bay, and adding artificiality to the event."

CDP training focuses on incident management, mass casualty response, and emergency response to a catastrophic natural disaster or terrorist act. CDP training for state, local, and tribal responders is fully funded by FEMA, a component of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Round-trip air and ground transportation, lodging, and meals are provided at no cost to responders or their agency. To learn more about the Center for Domestic Preparedness, visit <http://cdp.dhs.gov> or call 866-213-9553.