

SAFE HOSPITALS INITIATIVE

Second Edition

HOSPITAL SAFETY INDEX

# GUIDE

for EVALUATORS



World Health  
Organization

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The Hospital Safety Index occupies a central place in local, national and global efforts to improve the functioning of hospitals in emergencies and disasters. This is an area that the World Health Organization (WHO) has promoted and supported for more than 25 years. After the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and WHO released the first version of the Hospital Safety Index in 2008, ministries of health and other health entities, other government ministries and agencies, and public and private hospitals across the six regions of WHO have joined their counterparts in the Americas in applying and adapting the Hospital Safety Index. The growing interest in safe hospitals led to calls from countries and other stakeholders for the revision of Hospital Safety Index to make it a truly global assessment tool that can be used in all contexts across the world.

In emergencies, disasters and other crises, a community must be able to protect the lives and well-being of the affected population, particularly in the minutes and hours immediately following impact or exposure. The ability of health services to function without interruption in these situations is a matter of life and death. The continued functioning of health services relies on a number of key factors, namely: that health services are housed in structures (such as hospitals or other facilities) that can resist exposures and forces from all types of hazards; medical equipment is in good working order and is protected from damage; community infrastructure and critical services (such as water, electricity etc.) are available to support the health services; and health personnel are able to provide medical assistance in safe and secure settings when they are most needed.

In 2005, at the 2nd World Conference for Disaster Reduction in Kobe, Japan, 168 countries approved the Hyogo Framework for Action and in so doing agreed to:

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“promote the goal of ‘hospitals safe from disasters’ by ensuring that all new hospitals are built to a level of safety that will allow them to function in disaster situations and implement mitigation measures to reinforce existing health facilities, particularly those providing primary health care.”<sup>1</sup>

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Defining the term “safe hospital” will help to guide the approach to assessing the safety of hospi-

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