

Medical device alarm safety in hospitals.

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Medical device alarm safety in hospitals. Sentinel event alert. 2013;(50):1-3.

<https://psnet.ahrq.gov/issue/medical-device-alarm-safety-hospitals>

The cacophony of alarms in hospitals has led many health care providers to become desensitized to them, a condition known as [alarm fatigue](#). This [sentinel event alert](#) describes how ignoring alarms can have fatal outcomes and recounts an intensive care unit [death](#) due to providers' lack of response to alarms signaling a patient's clinical decline. The sentinel event [database](#) includes 98 alarm-related events (80 of which resulted in death) between 2009 and June 2012. Because the database relies on voluntary reporting, this number likely represents a small proportion of actual events. The report outlines recommendations and potential strategies for improvement, including guideline development, training and education, and establishment of a cross-disciplinary team of clinicians, clinical engineers, information technologists, and risk managers focused on alarm safety. The Joint Commission is also considering developing a related [National Patient Safety Goal](#) to address this issue.