18 May 2016

Nambour General Hospital staff join firies to train for emergency

If you are at Nambour General Hospital on Thursday afternoon, 19 May and see emergency medical staff wearing hazardous materials protective suits and an increased number of emergency services vehicles, don’t be alarmed; it’s a training exercise!

More than 40 Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service (SCHHS) and emergency service personnel will take part in a joint training exercise in disaster preparedness on Thursday, 19 May 2016.

The exercise will focus on the response and management of a chemical, biological and radiological emergency situation at Nambour General Hospital.

It will bring together the expertise of more than 40 personnel from SCHHS, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services and Queensland Ambulance Service.

Director of Emergency Medicine, Dr Mike Natale said that while nothing compared to a real life emergency, this exercise would provide emergency medical teams and emergency services with the opportunity to practice their skills.

“The exercise also maintains public confidence that should a disaster situation arise, our hospital and emergency service agencies are well prepared and rehearsed to work together to deal with any situation,” Dr Natale said.

The exercise scenario will involve three teenagers arriving in a personal car to the ambulance bay at Nambour General Hospital with symptoms of unknown chemical exposure. It will be made as realistic as possible, with actors playing the three patients and two fire trucks, a decontamination trailer and chemical diagnostic truck on site.

“This exercise is about working as one team with fire and other emergency services to ensure our patients, visitors and staff remain as safe as possible in any situation,” Dr Natale said.

“Anything can happen in real life, so for our medical, nursing, security and education officers to practice our response to a disaster is the best way to be prepared,” he said.

The Queensland Fire and Emergency Services advised the following for anyone who comes in contact with chemicals:

- Move away from the chemical if possible – up hill and up wind;
- Phone 000, report the incident and wait for the ambulance to arrive;
- If you know, name the chemical, the quantity, length of time exposed and area of body affected;
- Use water to dilute the chemical on the body (hose down, shower, wash for 15-30 minutes);
Do NOT try to drive to the hospital or medical facility - you may be overcome by the chemical and crash your vehicle;

Do NOT make physical contact with others not already affected by the chemical;

Do NOT enter an ambulance or a hospital emergency department without first being de-contaminated; and

Do NOT self present at any medical facility or hospital.

The training exercise will run from 1pm to 2.30pm on Thursday, 19 May. It will not interfere with regular hospital services and the public should not be alarmed if they see an increased number of emergency vehicles at Nambour General Hospital during this time.

MEDIA OPPORTUNITY - THURSDAY 19 MAY 2016

12:00pm  Interviews available:
            - Dr Mike Natale, Director of Emergency Medicine
            - QFES Acting Inspector, Archie Andrews

Where:  Emergency department, Nambour General Hospital.

1:15pm  Footage of SCHHS medical staff working with QFES as they decontaminate patients and staff exposed to unknown chemical.

Where:  Beside car park behind Nambour General Hospital.

ENDS

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