

Nick Howson (Western Sydney LHD)

From: Nick Howson (Western Sydney LHD)
Sent: Friday, 24 February 2023 11:16 AM
To: Christine Dictado (Western Sydney LHD); Wade Norrie (Western Sydney LHD); Janine Van Bruinessen (Western Sydney LHD)
Cc: Ashaben Nakrani (Western Sydney LHD); Asdeep Kaur (Sydney LHD); Darren Penney (Western Sydney LHD); WSLHD-MHS-NursingExecutive; Luz San Pedro (Western Sydney LHD)
Subject: C4A/C4B duress alarms
Attachments: C4A&B Duress Tags.jpg

Good morning,

Attached to this email is a photo of all duress alarms not currently being used by the staff of C4A/C4B in Westmead Hospital. All the alarms are flat on the table and they are not activating a person-down alarm.

Below are some excerpts from Chapter 11: Duress Alarm Systems from the NSW Health *Protecting People and Property* manual regarding these type of alarms:

- Workers must have unobstructed access to purpose designed equipment enabling them to summon assistance if they are faced with a personal threat or physical assault. This may include the use of personal duress alarms or fixed duress alarms or both, reflective of the nature of the work being performed and level of risk of threats identified.
- Personal duress alarms are used where the worker is moving around within a building in the course of their work and where there is a risk of being confronted by aggressive behaviour.
- All personal duress alarm units must have the following features:
 - provide activation that can be initiated by the wearer and also activated where the user is not moving or has fallen down. These must not be able to be disabled by individual workers. Where frequent false alarms are occurring discussion with the provider of the duress alarm must occur to identify options for reducing these false alarms.
 - include a warning when the person down/no movement feature is about to trigger

The C4A and C4B duress alarms do not have the person-down function enabled. It also does not appear that this functionality can be disabled at a user/tag level and is disabled elsewhere. Given the incidents last week in C4B and the very serious incident in Blacktown ED this functionality needs to be immediately enabled for the safety of the staff in C4A/C4B. I would also like to draw your attention to SafeWork Improvement notice 7-394893 issued to Bungaribee House regarding the same style of duress alarm system and provider having issues with reliability and functionality in March of 2021.

There have also been queries about if people are testing the alarms. My understanding of the self-test functionality is that it only tests to see if the alarm can communicate with the system to send alerts to other alarms. It does not test or show which functionality is enabled on each alarm unit.

This email is being sent in my capacity as a Health and Safety Representative under s68 and s69 of The Work Health and Safety Act as there is a serious risk to the health or safety of workers. I am requesting action to remedy this situation immediately and to be included in communication regarding this issue as per s68(2)(f).

Regards,

Nick Howson

Health and Safety Representative | **Hainsworth Unit**

