GALLAGHER Security

Proven Strategies for Healthcare Security:

A Step-by-Step Guide

Healthcare is at a breaking point.

Skills shortages, underfunding, and overwhelming patient demand are pushing hospitals to their limits. Outdated technology and fragmented operations add to the strain, leaving healthcare professionals struggling to deliver the care patients desperately need.

These systemic issues impact every corner of the industry and security is no exception.

Security teams navigate rising incidents of theft, violence, and cyber breaches while maintaining compliance with strict regulations and operational continuity all without disrupting patient care.

To overcome these challenges, healthcare leaders are turning to integrated systems that are cost-effective, scalable, compliant, and reliable.

This guide provides security managers with the knowledge needed to confidently navigate these challenges. Inside, you'll find actionable strategies to protect your hospital and ensure operational resilience.

A Practical Checklist for Security Managers

Use this checklist to evaluate your current security system's effectiveness and locate specific strategies that align with your security priorities. Simply refer to the associated page number listed at the end of each question.

1. Can your security systems provide centralized visibility and control across all your distributed facilities? **(If you answered no, go to page 4)**

2. Do your security systems integrate seamlessly with existing infrastructure for a unified view? **(If you answered no, go to page 5)**

3. Does your security system have offline capabilities to ensure uninterrupted operation during critical events? **(If you answered no, go to page 6)**

4. Are real-time monitoring and reporting features available to help promptly identify and address security concerns? **(If you answered no, go to page 7)**

5. Do you have secure storage systems in place for patient belongings? **(If you answered no, go to page 8)**

6. Does your current security system provider offer unlimited staff training? **(If you answered no, go to page 9)**

7. Do your access control systems provide granular, role-based access for staff and temporary personnel? **(If you answered no, go to page 10)**

8. Does your security system provide comprehensive reporting capabilities to support compliance audits? **(If you answered no, go to page 11)**

9. Are your systems protected from cybersecurity threats and regularly updated? **(If you answered no, go to page 12)**

If you answered "no" to any of these questions, it's time to reevaluate and strengthen your security strategy.

Security Challenges in Healthcare Facilities

Addressing the complex security challenges faced in healthcare is essential to reduce risk and ensure seamless operations while delivering measurable value and return on investment (ROI).

In this section, we outline common healthcare security challenges and provide practical solutions to enhance safety and continuity.

Streamlined Multi-Site Security Management

Hospitals are complex environments with diverse security needs. From protecting patients and valuable medical equipment to managing high volumes of staff and visitors across multiple access points, hospitals house specialized departments, often in geographically dispersed facilities. Without centralized oversight, organizations risk gaps that can compromise safety and efficiency.

By adopting solutions capable of managing security across multiple sites, organizations can safely and efficiently manage their expanding healthcare services and streamline critical operations across all locations.

System Integration and Scalability

Modern healthcare facilities rely on various security and hospital systems like Nurse Call, CCTV, and car park management to deliver patient safety, efficiency, and security. But when these systems operate in silos they form gaps in response times and situational awareness, causing inefficiencies that snowball into bigger problems.

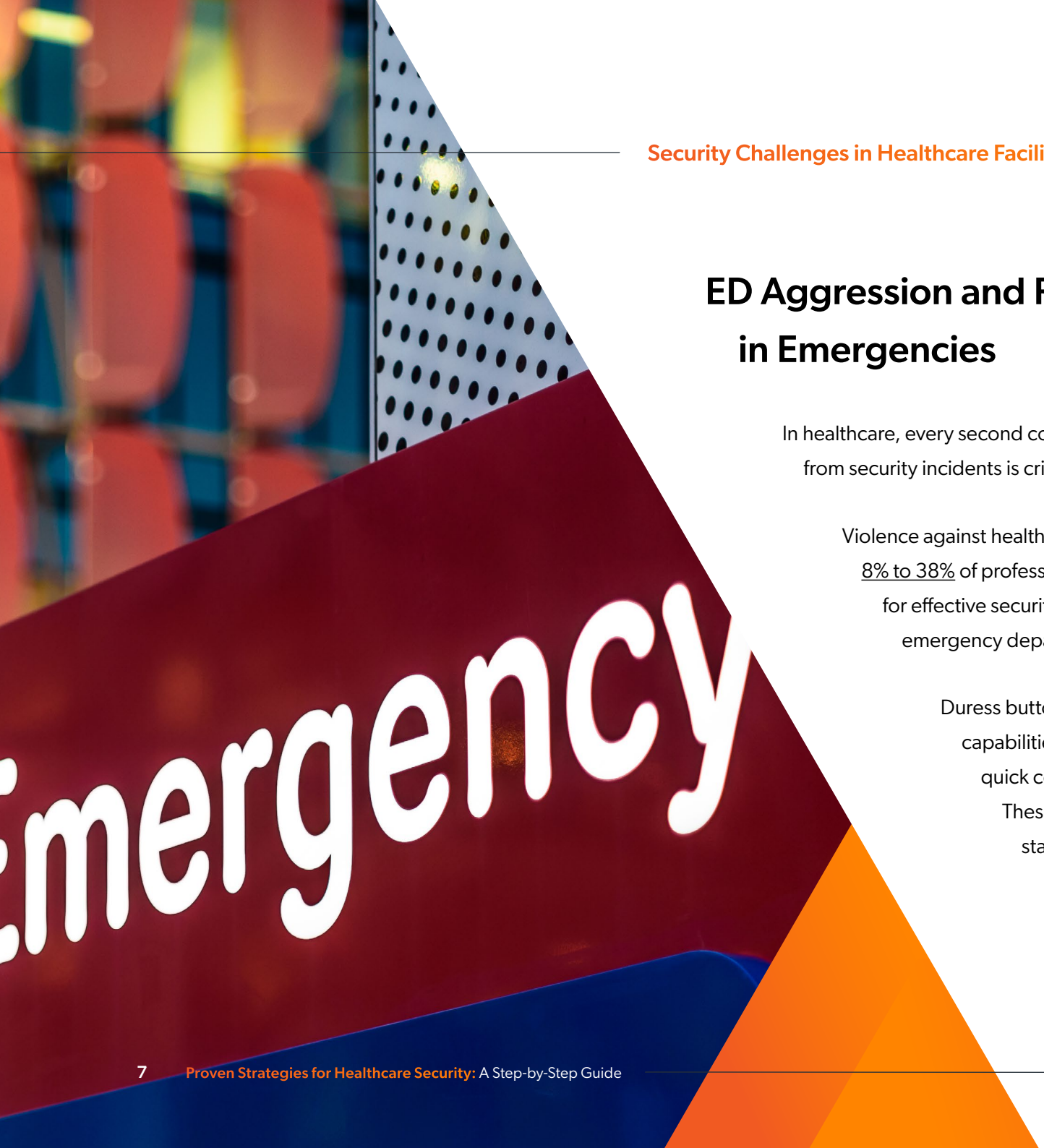
Treating these inefficiencies requires unifying systems into a centralized platform. Enabling seamless integrations boosts operational efficiency by automating critical responses and enhancing data accuracy. The result is a more secure, responsive environment for patients, staff, and visitors.

Reliability During Offline Events

The 24/7 demands of healthcare require security systems designed to withstand unexpected disruptions.

Unplanned events like natural disasters, cyberattacks, or even routine maintenance can cause power outages or network failures that interrupt systems, leaving facilities vulnerable and putting patient health and safety at risk.

To address these challenges, healthcare facilities need security solutions with offline capabilities that maintain essential access functions, even without server connectivity. This ensures continuous, controlled access to vital areas like operating rooms, pharmacies, and critical care units, while unauthorized individuals remain restricted.



ED Aggression and Responsiveness in Emergencies

In healthcare, every second counts. Rapid detection, containment, and recovery from security incidents is critical to protect patient care and staff safety.

Violence against healthcare workers is a growing concern, affecting 8% to 38% of professionals during their careers. As such, the need for effective security measures in high-stress environments like emergency departments, has never been more urgent.

Duress buttons, broadcast notifications, and lockdown capabilities enhance an emergency response by enabling quick communication, containment, and coordination. These solutions help deter aggression and protect staff, ensuring operational continuity.

Enhancing Security of Patient Belongings

Hospitals face ongoing challenges to secure patient belongings and day medications which are often stored in bedside cabinets, making them vulnerable to theft. Many rely on physical keys to manage these cabinets, sometimes with one single key serving large parts of the hospital, increasing the risk of theft and jeopardizing safety if medications fall into the wrong hands.

Managing unique keys presents significant logistical difficulties, leading hospitals to explore keyless alternatives. Wireless electronic locks integrated with centralized management systems offer a secure and flexible solution. Patients can set their own codes while staff can use override codes for emergencies, forgotten codes, or discharges. This system reduces theft, enhances security, and builds patient safety and trust.

Addressing High Turnover and Staffing Shortages

Healthcare organizations are facing an epidemic of staff shortages beyond frontline workers. For security teams worldwide, staffing has become a chronic condition.

The solution lies in learning and development. Research shows that businesses providing learning and development opportunities experience 30-50% higher retention rates than those that don't. For security teams, the diagnosis is clear: without upskilling, they risk attrition as 70% of employees would consider leaving their current role for one where training is prioritized.

To address staff shortages, hospitals must partner with security providers who offer training solutions. Educational platforms with unlimited access to online training courses empowers teams to maximize the value of security systems while fostering a culture of continuous learning, reducing turnover and the systemic challenges caused by staffing shortages.

Streamlined, Secure Access

Hospitals are home to a diverse workforce, including permanent staff, temporary contractors like locums, and support staff, as well as patients and visitors. Unrestricted access to sensitive areas like pharmacies, labs, and operating theatres introduces risks such as regulatory non-compliance, theft of medication, and operational disruptions.

Implementing strict, role-specific access control is crucial for maintaining security. By adhering to the "principle of least privilege," employees are granted access only to the areas relevant to their roles, while and patients are limited to public spaces. These measures reduce the chances of unauthorized entry and strengthens overall safety and compliance with regulatory requirements.

Ensuring Compliance with Access Control Solutions

Healthcare compliance is a critical responsibility for administrators, guided by regulations such as HIPAA, GDPR, and local health laws. Ensuring compliance is essential for protecting patient data, maintaining secure facilities, and preserving trust. Failure to comply can lead to severe legal consequences, including hefty fines and reputational damage.

The remedy lies in advanced healthcare access control systems. These systems simplify compliance management by providing detailed audit trails, delivering comprehensive logs of all access activities for accurate, verifiable evidence of regulatory compliance. By adopting the right access control technology, healthcare organizations can confidently protect their facilities, secure patient information, and maintain trust.

Protecting Against Cyberattacks

Healthcare organizations face relentless cyber threats with the average cost of a breach reaching an average of $10.93 million USD. The sector is a prime target, largely due to the high value and sensitivity of protected health information (PHI) and personally identifiable information (PII).

Hospitals must approach cybersecurity with the same precision as patient care to address growing threats. Partnering with cyber-responsible vendors is key. These vendors use rigorous in-house and third-party penetration testing, collaborate with industry experts, and leverage advanced technologies to stay ahead of threats.

Effective security solutions should also include built-in cybersecurity features, regular updates, and advanced encryption to protect sensitive data. By working with cyber-responsible vendors and their solutions, hospitals can reduce their risk of cyberattack and maintain secure operations.

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Smart Security That Supports Better Healthcare Outcomes

The challenges facing healthcare today are undeniable. Strained resources, inefficiencies, and outdated systems are putting immense pressure on staff, patients, and operations.

These issues don't have to define the future of care.

Gallagher's healthcare security systems are expertly designed to alleviate operational burdens, streamline compliance, and support better care delivery. Engineered to grow alongside expanding hospitals, we bring together access control, intruder alarms, and other hospital systems into one secure platform.

Schedule your free consultation with Gallagher Security

Reach out to one of our specialists to transform your healthcare operations and deliver better outcomes for your people and patients.

Unlock more

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