

National Patient Safety Goals: FAQ's

Goal #6: Reduce the harm associated with clinical alarm systems.

NPSG.06.01.01: Improve the safety of clinical alarm systems.

1. **What are the requirements of this goal?** By July 1, 2014, leaders must establish alarm system safety as a hospital priority. During 2014, leaders must identify the most important alarm signals to manage in their respective organization. By 2016, establish policies and procedures for managing alarms and educate staff about the proper operation and management of alarms for which they are responsible.

2. **Why did the Joint Commission identify alarm safety as a goal?** There have been many sentinel events reported to the Joint Commission that describe patient harm associated with alarm issues. There are many variables that impact alarm safety. The most common problems reported to Joint Commission are:
 - Improper alarm settings
 - Alarm settings not audible
 - Alarms inappropriately turned offOther reported problems include:
 - Alarm fatigue
 - Alarm settings that are not customized to the individual patient or patient population
 - Inadequately trained staff
 - Inadequate staffing to respond to alarms
 - Equipment malfunction.

6. **What alarms are included in this goal?** Examples include pulse oximetry, bedside telemetry, central station monitors, infusion pumps, ventilators, bed alarms, feeding pumps.