

Introduction to Never Events

Never events are the "kind of mistake that should never happen" in the field of medical treatment. According to the Leapfrog Group never events are defined as "adverse events that are serious, largely preventable, and of concern to both the public and health care providers for the purpose of public accountability."

Recommended actions following a never event

The Leapfrog Group suggested four actions to be taken following a never event:

1. Apologize to the patient
2. Report the event
3. Perform a root cause analysis
4. Waive costs directly related to the event

Never Events (USA)

1. Artificial insemination with the wrong donor sperm or donor egg
2. Unintended retention of a foreign body in a patient after surgery or other procedure
3. Patient death or serious disability associated with patient elopement (disappearance)
4. Patient death or serious disability associated with a medication error (e.g., errors involving the wrong drug, wrong dose, wrong patient, wrong time, wrong rate, wrong preparation or wrong route of administration)
5. Patient death or serious disability associated with a hemolytic reaction due to the administration of ABO/HLA-incompatible blood or blood products
6. Patient death or serious disability associated with an electric shock or elective cardioversion while being cared for in a healthcare facility
7. Patient death or serious disability associated with a fall while being cared for in a healthcare facility
8. Surgery performed on the wrong body part
9. Surgery performed on the wrong patient
10. Wrong surgical procedure performed on a patient
11. Intraoperative or immediately post-operative death in an ASA Class I patient
12. Patient death or serious disability associated with the use of contaminated drugs, devices, or biologics provided by the healthcare facility
13. Patient death or serious disability associated with the use or function of a device in patient care, in which the device is used or functions other than as intended
14. Patient death or serious disability associated with intravascular air embolism that occurs while being cared for in a healthcare facility

Never Events (USA) (cont)

15. Infant discharged to the wrong person
16. Patient suicide, or attempted suicide resulting in serious disability, while being cared for in a healthcare facility
17. Maternal death or serious disability associated with labor or delivery in a low-risk pregnancy while being cared for in a health care facility
18. Patient death or serious disability associated with hypoglycemia, the onset of which occurs while the patient is being cared for in a healthcare facility
19. Death or serious disability (kernicterus) associated with failure to identify and treat hyperbilirubinemia in neonates
20. Stage 3 or 4 pressure ulcers acquired after admission to a healthcare facility
21. Patient death or serious disability due to spinal manipulative therapy
22. Any incident in which a line designated for oxygen or other gas to be delivered to a patient contains the wrong gas or is contaminated by toxic substances
23. Patient death or serious disability associated with a burn incurred from any source while being cared for in a healthcare facility
24. Patient death or serious disability associated with the use of restraints or bedrails while being cared for in a healthcare facility
25. Any instance of care ordered by or provided by someone impersonating a physician, nurse, pharmacist, or other licensed healthcare provider
26. Abduction of a patient of any age
27. Sexual assault on a patient within or on the grounds of the healthcare facility
28. Death or significant injury of a patient or staff member resulting from a physical assault (i.e., battery) that occurs within or on the grounds of the healthcare facility