



Spartanburg Regional

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Fire extinguisher training heats up, thanks to major grant from Spartanburg Regional Foundation

How do you safely practice using a fire extinguisher—when there's no fire?

"It's not safe or feasible to start a fire just to show people how to prevent one, so the proper use of a fire extinguisher is a difficult lesson to teach, and to learn," said Mike Miller, Chief of Safety at Spartanburg Regional. "In recent history, very few people have really gotten a good and thorough explanation of how to handle an extinguisher in the heat of the moment."

But an award from the Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System Foundation has equipped Miller's department with a fire extinguisher training system to help hospital staff learn how to fight a fire with skill.

Instead of using real flames, however, those being trained will have to extinguish a simulated digital fire—and a very tough, no-nonsense simulated digital fire, at that. Similar to a video game, the system is called the Bulls-Eye, and for good reason, said Doug Neubauer, safety specialist.

"It senses where the user aims and sweeps the laser extinguisher and varies the digitized flames in response to how the person being trained is fighting the fire," Neubauer said. "The training system only puts the fire out when the extinguisher is used correctly. So it's very, very effective and obviously much safer than a real fire."

Hospitals are required to ensure that front-line staff is proficient in the use of fire extinguishers. But, until now, Miller and Neubauer have been scratching their heads on how to effectively meet the criteria without compromising the overall safety of Spartanburg Regional's many buildings on the hospital's main campus.

"This project is a great representation of what the Spartanburg Regional Foundation can do," said Dr. Sheila Breitweiser, the Foundation's executive director, said. "This fire extinguisher program is essential tool that will improve safety and education while also fulfilling a very pragmatic need for the hospital and, ultimately, the community at large."

Neubauer agrees. Once the hospital staff is trained, the \$13,000 Bulls-Eye system will be shared with other community partners, like schools and libraries.

"We view the Foundation as a partner," Neubauer said. "This grant has allowed us to focus on other areas of safety. Now, we've the fire extinguisher training covered."

The Spartanburg Regional Foundation is a charitable corporation whose primary mission is to benefit the Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System through direct support of SRHS and also through its support of community programs and services that share the SRHS mission of providing quality healthcare to our community.

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