



Use control measures to minimize risks of patient handling

Patient handling is the top cause of injury among healthcare workers. Care workers who manually transfer or reposition patients are at significant risk of musculoskeletal injuries (MSIs) such as sprains or strains.

Control measures are required

According to section 4.50 of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation, if a patient requires any help transferring or repositioning, control measures must be implemented to reduce MSI risks as much as possible. Before doing any transfer or repositioning task, conduct a risk assessment. Based on that assessment, consider controls that will minimize risk.

Hierarchy of control measures

Use the following flow chart to determine which control is most appropriate for both the patient and the worker.

All workers responsible for a transfer or repositioning task must receive instruction and have easy access to written guidelines for the chosen control measure. If there is a delay in implementing the appropriate control, interim measures must be put in place immediately. Interim control measures must not cause significant risk to workers and must be replaced by the permanent control measure as soon as possible.

For more information

Visit WorkSafeBC.com (Publications) for the following:

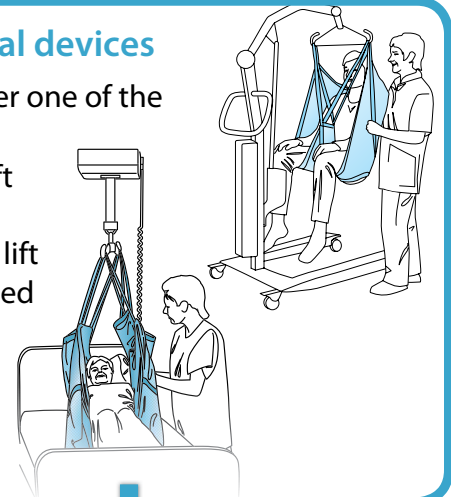
- *Handle with Care*
- *High-Risk Manual Handling of Patients in Healthcare*
- *Conduct risk assessments to determine the safest methods for patient handling* (bulletin)

For more healthcare information, go to WorkSafeBC.com, click Safety at Work, and under Industries select Health Care.

Mechanical devices

First consider one of the following:

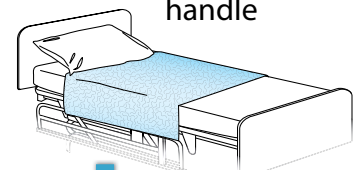
- Ceiling lift
- Floor lift
- Sit-stand lift
- Electric bed



Non-mechanical aids

If mechanical devices are not possible,* consider one of the following:

- Slider sheet
- Transfer board
- Bed ladder
- Grab bar
- Triangle trapeze handle



Procedural measures

If mechanical and non-mechanical aids are not possible,* consider one of the following:

- Reduce frequency of high-risk tasks
- Care in bed
- Changes to care plan

* For example, because of medical contraindications or a room that cannot accommodate a ceiling or floor lift