

Safe Patient Handling Policy



I. PURPOSE

To enhance the safety of the work environment for patient care providers and promote a safe and more comfortable hospital stay for patients who require total or partial moving or transfer assistance.

II. POLICY

A. [*Insert name of hospital*] (“Hospital”) recognizes the critical role that mobility has in a patient’s recuperative process, including its effect on length of stay. In addition, the Hospital recognizes the value of every healthcare worker and the potential risk of life-changing consequences related to cumulative effects from improper lifting, shifting, repositioning and transferring of patients. The potential unsafe handling of patients has negative financial consequences for healthcare facilities, patient care providers and patients. Therefore, it is crucial that all healthcare professionals practice techniques to provide safe patient handling and use of body mechanics at all times. State-of-the-art mechanical patient handling equipment and other approved patient aids are being provided as primary contributions to this effort.

B. Safe patient handling techniques must be used for all lifts as specified in this policy. During planned patient handling activities, staff personnel will not perform patient transfers/complex lifts without mechanical assistive devices

except in an emergency.

C. Patient handling activities include:

1. Repositioning in bed
2. Bed to chair/wheelchair
3. Bed to gurney and return
4. Gurney to treatment table and return
5. Bed to toilet
6. Floor to bed
7. Any other lift where total body movement of the non-ambulatory patient is required.

D. Teams of at least two (2) staff members who have been trained may perform these transfers using the designated equipment.

III. EQUIPMENT

All staff who participate in patient handling activities are required to use a mechanical assistive device for every patient handling activity when patients require full or partial assistance. Equipment available to the staff may include:

1. Mechanical vertical lifting devices
2. Mechanical standing/raising/transferring devices
3. Air powered lateral transfer mattresses
4. Full length slide boards
5. Gait belts
6. Mechanical weighing devices

IV. PROCEDURES

1. Staff members will not perform complex lifts or transfers on patients without the use of assistive devices.
2. Staff members are required to use assistive devices for all total body transfers except in the case of an

emergency.

3. Failure to comply with this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination under the Hospital's Disciplinary Policy.

V. RELATED DIRECTIVES

List related facility policies here, such as Worker Safety Policy, Ergonomics Program Policies, Injury and Illness Prevention Program, etc.

OTHER RESOURCES:

[AOHP's Resource Guide for Implementing a Safe Patient Handling Program in the Acute Care Setting](#)