

S

Space

Obstacle free, adequate space to perform tasks.

Q: Is environment free from all hazards? Is there adequate space to perform task?

YES

Utilize appropriate equipment.
Prepare area.

NO

Risks: flooring, obstacles, space, equipment, potentially confusing wall/floor patterns, distance to be moved, lighting, noise, temperature.

A

Assess

Assess the patient's physical and mental status, care needs, ability to assist, and weight-bearing capability in relation to lift or transfer activity.

Q: Is the patient cooperative?

YES

Q: Can patient assist?

FULLY

Assistance not needed.

PARTIALLY

Encourage patient to assist using a positioning aid or cues.

Q: Can patient bear weight?

FULLY

Assistance not needed.
Stand by for safety.

PARTIALLY

Use non-powered stand assist or full body sling lift equipment.

NO

Use full body sling lift and 2 or more staff.

Q: Does patient have upper body extremity strength?

YES

Seated transfer aid — use gait / transfer belt. Use stand and pivot technique with gait/transfer belt or powered standing assist lift with 1 staff.

NO

Use full body sling lift and 2 or more staff.

F

Function

Choose function:

lateral transfer, bed-to-chair, full-body lift, partial body lift, or repositioning

Apply protocol.

Use Algorithms.

***For repositioning,** put bed at comfortable / safe height for staff; flat or in Trendelenburg position to aid in gravity, with side rail down.

***For patients with Stage III or IV pressure ulcers,** avoid shearing force. Use devices designed to minimize shearing force.

E

Equipment

Choose lifting equipment.

Ensure number and kinds of equipment available

for each patient and on the unit for each shift.

< 200 pounds

Use a friction reducing device and 2-3 staff for partially assisting patients.

> 200 pounds

Use a friction reducing device and at least 3 staff.

Bariatric Algorithm?

L

Lift support

Call for assistance or obtain help from co-workers as needed.

I

Injury

Be aware of the kinds of injuries you might experience as a consequence of patient handling tasks.

Protect yourself and your patient from injury.

F

Frequency

Evaluate frequency of handling tasks for your patient.

Manage your workload and time to conduct lifts and transfers safely.

Injuries occur among staff as a result of:

Force: The amount of physical effort required to perform the task or to maintain control of the equipment

Repetition: Performing the same motion or series of motions continually or frequently: Micro tears and Micro fractures

Awkward postures: Assuming positions that place stress on the body, such as reaching above shoulder height, kneeling, squatting, leaning over a bed, or twisting the torso while lifting.

T

Training

Participate and complete training sessions to stay up to date and competent to perform safe patient handling tasks, including knowledge about proper use of equipment and devices. Ask for additional training as needed. Training should be annually, for new hires or if there is a break in procedure.

What can you do to protect yourself and your patients?

Workplace walk-through

- Recognize hazards in the work place and report findings for repair.
- Perform a walk through to identify patient handling hazards.
- Note hazards and inform your facility's safe patient handling committee.
- Survey staff for patient handling tasks they feel pose injury risk.
- Get data for safe patient handling committee.
- Prioritize and address high risk areas and tasks.

Review injury data

Employees and labor representatives are entitled to information about:

- Worker injury logs, compensation data, facility injury surveillance data and accident reports.
- Use this data to prioritize actions for the safe patient handling committee.

Inventory lift equipment

- Determine whether patient handling needs are being met.
- Assess if additional or updated equipment is needed.
- Ensure lift equipment is in working order by routinely assessing the equipment and repairing if required. No workarounds.

Identify barriers and solutions

Factors to consider:

- Management support
- Budget
- Staff readiness and training
- Physical space
- Architectural plans

Being aware of these issues can help you implement safe patient handling plans more effectively.

Washington State Nurses Association

www.wsna.org and (206) 575-7979

Washington State Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission

(360) 236-4702

Washington State Department of Health

(360) 236-4700

Washington State Department of Social and Health Services

(800) 737-0617

Washington State Department of Labor and Industries

Report hazards, unsafe work or discrimination

www.lni.wa.gov and (800) 423-7233

Protecting nurses as
a valuable resource

Safe lift
decisions

State of Washington

Department of Labor and Industries:
Safety and Health Investment Project

Washington State University
College of Nursing



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