

Fact Sheet



Division of Developmental Disabilities Health Care Services

Transfer/Lift Safety

Health Information Fact Sheet #2

Transfer/Lift Safety: This is the process of lifting and/or moving a member from one location or surface to another, such as from a bed to a wheelchair or a chair to a vehicle seat, without causing injury or harm to the member or caregiver.

Fact Sheet guidelines have been provided as general information, not as a substitution for medical treatment from a physician.

Did You Know?

- Lifting and transferring members is the number one (#1) reported cause of back, knee, and shoulder injury in healthcare workers.
- Unsafe transfers can cause serious, life-threatening injury to the member and the caregiver.

Risk Factors

That can cause injury:

- Members who cannot cooperate
 - Confused
 - Combative/ aggressive
 - Fearful/ anxious
- Members with impairments
 - Non-weight bearing
 - Partial weight bearing
 - Unable to assist
 - Psychotropic medication use
 - Developmental impairment
- Caregivers who are unprepared or not skilled
 - Untrained
 - Unfamiliar with the member
 - Believes that healthy & fit caregivers cannot get injured
 - Does not ask for help
- Faulty or Damaged Equipment
- Lack of Needed Equipment/Supplies

Be Alert!

- Always be alert to potential hazards and risks when transferring members from one location to another even when just turning someone in bed.

Prevention:

- Provide training to staff responsible for lifts and transfers of members.
- Ensure staff ratio is appropriate to meet the member's needs.
- Orient new and existing staff to members needing transfers/lifts.
- Provide equipment as needs change; such as lifts, gait belts, and slide boards.
- Maintain equipment in good working condition.
- Repair and/or replace equipment as needed.
- Refer back to training and resources regarding use of available equipment.
- Identify members "at-risk" for difficult transfers.

Emergency

Immediately call 9-1-1 when any of the following conditions occur:

- *Difficulty breathing*
- *Bleeding*
- *Loss of consciousness*
- *Excessive pain*
- *Change in alertness or ability to pay attention*

The Transfer/Lift Safety Fact Sheet is in a series of Health Information Fact Sheets compiled by DDD Health Care Services. Issued July 2013; Reviewed/Revised April 2025.

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