

MANUAL OF ADMINISTRATION

TOPIC: HEALTH AND SAFETY	SUBJECT: Transfers, Lifts, Ramps and Wheelchairs	Code: HS195
		Date of Issue: March 2004
		Revised: May 2015
		Page 1 of 3

PURPOSE: The purpose of this policy is to ensure awareness among employees to help protect workers from injuries when transferring, lifting or using ramps while supporting individuals.

DEFINITIONS:

Transfer: The procedure used to assist an individual, who can bear weight with at least one leg or both arms, to move from one surface to another.

Lift: The procedure used to carry the entire weight of a person.

Ramp: The floor model or adaptive aid to be used by persons in wheelchairs for safe entry into or within a location as an alternative to steps.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

Support Worker:

1. Prior to performing a routine transfer or lift, or using a ramp, assess the situation to ensure the chosen procedure is still appropriate. If appropriate help is not available, call your Manager or On-Call (after hours) for direction. If using a mechanical lift device at another facility, ensure you are trained on the device prior to use or where possible have facility staff operate for you.
2. If the use of a ramp is necessary but one is not in place, seek assistance from the location. Do not attempt to install or remove a temporary ramp yourself.
3. Ensure lighting is adequate prior to using the ramp.
4. Check that the area is safe to perform the transfer/lift:
 - Ensure that the path of the transfer or lift is clear by removing any obstacles and that there are no spills on the floor.
 - Ensure the lighting is adequate to perform a safe transfer or lift.

Lifts and Transfers:

1. The dignity of the person you are supporting is important. Verbally describe to the person how the transfer or lift will take place. Position yourself so that the person you are transferring or lifting feels safe and can see and/or hear you.
2. Plan your lift. Ensure the individual is transferred or lifted the shortest possible distance.

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		Date of Issue: March 2004
		Revised: May 2015
		Page 2 of 3

3. Never grasp an individual by the arms which may result in shoulder injury to the individual being supported.
4. Be prepared for the unexpected. Pause during each step of the procedure for the safety of the individual and yourself. Designate one worker to count out loud (1-2-3, lift) when performing the lift or transfer with another person.
5. Postpone the task if the person you are supporting is unsafe, restless or is experiencing involuntary movements.
6. Ensure that the brakes located on both sides of the wheelchair are in the **on** position before attempting the lift or transfer.
7. Tighten your abdominal and buttock muscles and use your leg muscles to lift in order to protect your spine from injury.
8. Move your whole body, including your feet, in the direction of the transfer or lift. Do not rotate or twist your spine.

Ramps:

1. When supporting a person in a wheelchair **down** a ramp, hold wheelchair handles and walk down the ramp using leg muscles and keeping your back straight.
2. When supporting a person in a wheelchair **up** a ramp, use the wheelchair handles and push in a forward motion.
3. When supporting ambulatory individuals that cannot safely use stairs to use a ramp, grasp the individual under the arm on one side, and have that individual use the railing to support the majority of their own weight.
4. When supporting ambulatory individuals who use walkers, the individual should be supported to use a ramp.

Manager:

1. Ensure employees are properly trained, have received orientation and have reviewed policies related to transfers, lifts, wheelchairs/walkers and use of ramps where required.

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		Date of Issue: March 2004
		Revised: May 2015
		Page 3 of 3

2. Ensure employees who use other facilities' lifting equipment are properly trained on use.

EQUIPMENT:

1. Check equipment for safety and ensure the ramp is in safe condition before use.
2. Ensure that any equipment in use is positioned correctly. (i.e., wheelchair brakes are on, wheelchair is close to the bed or chair, foot pedals are in proper position, armrests removed if necessary, ramp is secured safely.)
3. Contact the appropriate person in case of faulty equipment.