

DEVELOPING YOUR SAFE PATIENT HANDLING PROGRAM: GETTING STARTED



Step 1: Establish Your Safe Patient Handling Committee

- Recruit participants (50% direct care staff)
- Elect committee chair and co-chair
- Develop meeting schedule and protocols

Step 2: Train the Safe Patient Handling Committee

- Role of the committee
- Hazard assessment techniques
- Selection of equipment
- Organizational change techniques
- Program evaluation methods

Step 3: Write Your Safe Patient Handling Policy

- Administrative practices
- Procedures
- Organizational practices

Sources:

Ontario Safety Association for Community & Health Care (2005). OSACH Planning Guide for Implementation of Client Mechanical Lifts, Second Edition

Occupational Health and Safety Agency for Healthcare in British Columbia (2000). OHSAH Reference Guidelines for Safe Patient Handling

Who should be on the Committee?



Representation on Safe Patient Handling Committees:

Patient Care Staff
Senior Management
Safety Representative
Human Resources
Employee Health
Facilities
Maintenance
Housekeeping

Step 4: Assess Risks and Needs

- Conduct an analysis of injuries
- Identify and prioritize patient handling risks
- Assess patient mobility needs and capabilities by unit
- Conduct an inventory of patient handling equipment
- Identify environmental and organizational barriers and solutions

Step 5: Development Plan for Determining Equipment Needs

- Who will use the equipment and how will they be trained (e.g., unit-based peer safety leaders)
- Determine equipment locations
- Identify tasks where equipment will be used
- Decide how much of each equipment type is needed

Step 6: Annual Program Evaluation

- Changes in the number of musculoskeletal disorder claims
- Changes in the number of days of lost work due to musculoskeletal disorders from patient handling
- Recommendations to improve the program