



POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

SUBJECT: SAFE PATIENT HANDLING POLICY

POLICY NO: 311.003

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.

SCOPE:

This policy and any related procedures apply to all acute care hospitals in Department of Health Services.

DEFINITION:

“Emergency” means unanticipated circumstances that can be life-threatening or cause significant injuries to the patient, staff or public, requiring immediate action.

POLICY:

- A. Department of Health Services recognizes the critical role that mobility has in a patient’s recuperative process, including its effect on length of stay. In addition, the Department recognizes the value of every healthcare worker and the potential risk of life-changing consequences related to cumulative effects of 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. The provision of state-of-the-art mechanical patient handling equipment and other approved patient aids are being provided as a primary contribution to this effort.
- B. Safe patient handling techniques will be used for all lifts as specified in this policy. During patient handling activities, except in an emergency, staff personnel will perform patient transfers/complex lifts with mechanical assistive devices as appropriate for the specific patient and consistent with the professional judgment and clinical assessment of the registered nurse, who is the coordinator of care.

APPROVED BY:
REVIEW

DATES: January 28, 2013

EFFECTIVE DATE: February 1, 2013

SUPERSEDES: January 1, 2013

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

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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 2 staff members who have been trained may perform these transfers using the designated equipment.

EQUIPMENT

Equipment available to the staff may include:

- A. Mechanical vertical lifting devices
- B. Mechanical standing/raising/transferring devices
- C. Air powered lateral transfer mattresses
- D. Full length slide boards
- E. Gait belts
- F. Mechanical weighing devices

PROCEDURES:

Except in an emergency, staff will perform complex lifts or transfers on patients with the use of assistive devices as appropriate for the specific patient and consistent with the professional judgment and clinical assessment of the registered nurse, as the coordinator of care.

REFERENCES:

California Labor Code, Section 6403.5

Association of Occupational Health Professionals in Healthcare (AOHP), Beyond Getting Started: A Resource Guide for Implementing a Safe Patient Handling Program in the Acute Care Setting, Second Edition, Summer 2011

EFFECTIVE

DATE: February 1, 2013

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