

Safe Patient Handling and Movement 101

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Abstract: Based on the US Department of Labor, hospitals have high rates of nonfatal occupational injuries and illnesses. In 2013 (the most current reporting year), U.S. hospitals have 6.4 work-related injuries and illnesses for every 100 full-time employees as compared to 3.3 per 100 full-time employees for all U.S. industries combined. In the same year, over 50 percent of injuries and illnesses reported among nursing assistants were musculoskeletal disorders. To this effect, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration is targeting the following most common causes of workplace injuries and illness in health care settings during their inspection: musculoskeletal disorders related to patient or resident handling; workplace violence; bloodborne pathogens; tuberculosis; and slips, trips and falls.

The current presentation discusses how issues surrounding manual patient or resident handling and movement can be substituted with safe methods guided by the principles of ergonomics. In addition, other relevant topics to be covered are: typical safe patient handling and movement training programs; minimal or zero lift policy in different US states; caregiver responsibility; and patient-family education with respect to usage of safe patient transfer. Overall emphasis in the presentation will be on reducing both caregiver and patient risk for an injury during the provision of care.

Keywords: Safe patient handling and mobility, Caregiver safety, Employee injuries