

Section: <b>Health &amp; Safety</b>	Policy Number: <b>D-023</b>	Approval Date: February, 2016.
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**LIFTS, TRANSFERS and PHYSICAL ASSISTANCE POLICY**

**Policy:**

Community Living-Central Huron is committed to providing a safe and healthy work environment for staff, volunteers and people supported. To achieve success with this commitment, the Agency will abide by relevant Ministry legislation and regulations, including the Occupational Health & Safety Act (OHSA), as well as provide relevant training and education by qualified professionals pertaining to lifts, transfers and physical assistance. All employees and volunteers must be aware of and adhere to safe lifting, transferring and physical assistance procedures, outlined herein. Failure to abide by said Policy and Procedures may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination from employment.

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this policy is to emphasize the proper procedures and requirements for lifting, transferring and providing physical assistance to ensure a safe, healthy work environment for all employees, volunteers and people supported. Also to increase and maintain awareness and education for proper techniques for lifting, transferring, repositioning and providing physical assistance. Prevention will be the primary focus. Community Living-Central Huron is committed to continuously improving the health, safety and well-being of staff, volunteers and people supported through the prevention of occupational illness and injury.

**Definitions:**

Lift:

The procedure used when the entire weight of a person or object is borne by the person completing the lift.

Transfer:

A procedure used when assisting a person to move from one surface to another. A transfer should be used when a person can follow direction and can bear weight either fully or partially through one or two legs or both arms and is capable of participating. Also when appropriate transfer devices such as a transfer belt or sliding board is available.

Repositioning:

The procedure used to move a person to a new position on the same surface (ie. while in bed, chair, floor). The person being moved may or may not assist with the procedure.

Physical Assistance:

The act of providing care and support to individuals who are less physically independent in managing activities of daily living.

## **Responsibility:**

### **Employer:**

The Employer will:

- abide by the Occupational Health and Safety Act and all other relevant legislation;
- take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of an employee and volunteer by accessing qualified professionals to evaluate the risks of using lifts, transfers and providing physical assistance that may arise in the workplace, the type of work or conditions of work and to reassess the risks as often as is necessary;
- provide and maintain equipment, materials, protective and assistive devices as required and as recommended by qualified professionals; equipment may include but is not limited to: mechanical ceiling, portable, manual, outside or van lifts, slings, transfer belts, wheelchairs, walkers, etc.
- maintain and up-date the Risk Registry of identified workplace hazards/risks related to lifts, transfers and physical assistance;
- include measures and procedures for employees and volunteers to report to their Supervisor incidents of injury or hazards, or the potential of such, related to lifts, transfers and providing physical assistance;
- establish a procedure as to how the Employer will investigate and manage incidents and injuries from lifts, transfers and providing physical assistance;
- ensure all materials and literature used for lifts, transfers and physical assistance is present in the workplace, up-to-date and is identified in the appropriate manner and are available in English and such other languages as required;
- review at least once a year the Agency's Occupational Health and Safety Policy and Procedures for the health and safety of employees and volunteers and revise based on current legislation and practice;
- review and revise measures and procedures related to lifts, transfers and providing physical assistance at least annually and more frequently if the employer and Location Health and Safety Representatives determine necessary;
- in consultation with Location Health and Safety Representatives, develop, establish and provide training and educational programs on lifts, transfers, repositioning and physical assistance, safety measures and procedures for employees that are relevant to employees' work and as per recommendations of a qualified professional.

### **Supervisor:**

The Supervisor will:

- comply with the Occupation Health & Safety Act and all other relevant legislation;
- advise employees and volunteers of the existence of any potential or actual danger to the health and safety of employees and volunteers, related to lifts, transfers, repositioning and providing physical assistance of which the Supervisor is aware;
- provide employees and volunteers, when so prescribed, written instructions as to the measures and procedures to be taken for protection of the employee and volunteer related to lifts, transfers, repositioning and providing physical assistance, as per recommendations of a qualified professional;
- take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of the employee and volunteer related to lifts, transfers, repositioning and providing physical assistance;
- conduct annual Workplace Hazard/Risk Assessments using the Agency's designated form, ensuring procedures for lifts, transfers and physical assistance is included;
- complete monthly workplace inspections/audits;
- ensure regular inspections (as per manufacturer's instructions) are completed and documented for all mechanical lift or assistive device product/system;
- ensure employees and volunteers work in a safe manner and with the protective devices and equipment, measures and procedures required by the Occupational Health and Safety Act; the Health Care and Residential Facilities Regulation and the Agency's Health & Safety Policies and

Procedures;

- instruct and train or arrange with qualified professionals to train/educate employees and volunteers on how to properly lift, transfer, reposition and provide physical assistance;
- educate employees and volunteers on the hazards and risks and provide written measures and procedures, as required for lifts, transfers, repositioning and providing physical assistance;
- investigate all reports of health and safety hazards/risks and incidents related to lifts, transfers, repositioning and providing physical assistance;
- respond in writing to any written or verbal reports and provide written recommendations of hazards/risks/incidents related to lifts, transfers, repositioning and providing physical assistance.

### **Location Health and Safety Representatives:**

The Location Health and Safety Representatives will:

- participate in all training and educational programs, as determined by the Employer to be beneficial for the area of lifts, transfers, repositioning and providing physical assistance;
- encourage co-workers to work safely and to report any hazardous or unsafe conditions immediately to their Supervisor or designate using Workplace Hazard and Suggestion Report;
- obtain from the Employer information concerning the conducting or taking of tests of any equipment, machine, device, article, thing, material or biological, chemical or physical agent in or about a workplace related to lifts, transfers, repositioning and providing physical assistance, for the purpose of occupational health and safety;
- be consulted about, and be present at the beginning of testing conducted in or about the workplace if the representative believes his or her presence is required to ensure that valid testing procedures are used or to ensure that the test results are valid related to lifts, transfers, repositioning and providing physical assistance;
- related to lifts, transfers, repositioning and providing physical assistance, obtain information from the Employer respecting the identification of potential or existing hazards of materials, processes or equipment, and health and safety experience and work practice(s) and standards in similar or other industries of which the Employer has knowledge;
- conduct and document monthly inspections of their work location and submit such to their immediate Supervisor within the designated time frame;
- identify and report situations immediately, that may be a source of danger or hazard to employees and volunteers and make recommendations to their Supervisor by completing a Workplace Hazard & Suggestion Report;
- review location Workplace Hazard and Suggestion Reports and make written recommendations;
- review Employee Incident Reports and make written recommendations and submit to Supervisor or designate in the time frame required;
- accompany a Ministry of Labour Inspector during an inspection visit;
- investigate work refusals related to lifts, transfers and providing physical assistance;
- investigate, when notified by the employer of a critical injury/fatality and provide a report in writing to the Ministry of Labour, within forty-eight (48) hours as prescribed.

### **Employees:**

The Employees will:

- arrange for regular inspections (as per manufacturer's instructions) are completed and documented for all mechanical lift or assistive device product/system;
- document and complete daily inspections of all equipment and devices used within the work location;
- report to their Supervisor or designate, immediately, the absence of or defect in any equipment or protective device of which the worker is aware and which may endanger himself, herself or another employee or volunteer using a Workplace Hazard and Suggestion Report;
- report to their Supervisor or designate, immediately, anything that may be a hazard or risk using a Workplace Hazard and Suggestion Report;
- abide by good handling techniques/safe work practices/safe operating procedures, related to lifts, transfers, repositioning and providing physical assistance; qualified professionals will provide

- training as appropriate;
- take part, when requested, in a workplace inspection to advise of any hazards or risks related to lifts, transfers, repositioning and providing physical assistance;
- seek clarification from the relevant Supervisor or designate on lifts, transfers, repositioning and providing physical assistance related tasks;
- participate in all training and educational programs, as determined by the Employer to be beneficial for lifts, transfers, repositioning and providing physical assistance;
- abide by written protocols, procedures related to lifts, transfers, repositioning and any other physical assistance requirement;
- be aware of and abide by the Agency's Policies and Procedures related to lifts, transfers, repositioning and physical assistance.

### **Reporting and Investigation:**

It is the responsibility of all employees and volunteers to immediately report all potential risk factors for hazards/incidents related to lifts, transfers, repositioning and providing physical assistance to their immediate Supervisor or designate using the Employee Incident Form and/or the Workplace Hazard & Suggestion Report. The Supervisor will investigate risks/hazards/incidents as soon as possible and take appropriate steps to address any continuing risk to the health, safety and well being of all employees and volunteers. Should a hazard result in a critical injury or fatality, Supervisors, employees and Location Health and Safety Representatives will follow the Agency's Critical Injury Policy (D-006).

### **Evaluation:**

Community Living-Central Huron is committed to looking at leading indicators of workplace risks and hazards related to lifts, transfers, repositioning and providing physical assistance, through such methods as information gathering (Workplace Inspections, Incident Investigations, Job Hazard Analysis, etc), surveys, data collection (Rate Group Trends), Internal Responsibility System (IRS) and Staff meetings.

Supervisors will regularly audit employee and volunteer practices related to lifts, transfers, repositioning and providing physical assistance through such means as, monthly, periodic inspections at the work locations; documenting written reports of on the designated form(s); providing written recommendations in response to any reports of hazards/risks related to lifts, transfers, repositioning and providing physical assistance; reviewing monthly work location checklists completed by Location Health and Safety Representatives; maintaining and following a preventative maintenance equipment schedule; and completing annual workplace hazard/risk assessments. The Location Health and Safety Representatives will provide written recommendations to the Employer when identifying issues related to lifts, transfers, repositioning and providing physical assistance and any risks to employees or volunteers. The Agency will maintain a Hazard/Risk Registry, which will be updated annually in consultation with the LH&S Representatives, as necessary, based on the written information/documentation received by Supervisors, employees, volunteers and the Location Health and Safety Representatives.

### **Good Handling Techniques for Lifting/Transferring/Physical Assistance:**

**Think/assess before lifting/transferring/providing physical assistance. Refer to written protocols and procedures.** Plan the lift/move/assistance. Can handling aids be used? Can the individual bear some weight in the legs and/or arms? Where is the individual/load going to be placed? Will help be needed with the individual/ load? Remove obstructions such as laundry, bedding, pets. For a long lift, consider resting the individual/load midway on a table or bench to change grip.

**Adopt a stable position.** Your feet should be apart with one leg slightly forward to maintain balance (alongside the individual/load, if it is on the ground). Be prepared to move your feet during the lift/transfer/physical assistance to maintain your stability. Avoid tight clothing or unsuitable footwear, which may make this difficult.

**Get a good hold.** Where possible and appropriate the individual/load should be hugged as close as possible to your body. This may be better than gripping it tightly with hands only.

**Start in a good posture.** At the start of the lift/transfer/physical assistance, slight bending of the back, hips and knees is preferable to fully flexing the back (stooping) or fully flexing the hips and knees (squatting).

**Don't flex your back any further while lifting/transferring.** This can happen if the legs begin to straighten before starting to raise the individual/load.

**Keep the individual/load close to the waist.** Keep the individual/load close to your body for as long as possible while lifting/transferring. Keep the heaviest side of the load next to your body. If a close approach to the individual/load is not possible, try to slide it towards the body before attempting to lift it.

**Avoid twisting your back or leaning sideways, especially while your back is bent.** Shoulders should be kept level and facing in the same direction as the hips. Turn by moving your feet is better than twisting and lifting at the same time.

**Keep your head up when handling.** Look ahead, not down at the individual/load, once the individual/load has been held securely.

**Move smoothly.** The individual/load should not be jerked or snatched as this can make it harder to keep control and can increase the risk of injury.

**Don't lift or handle more than can be easily managed.** There is a difference between what people can lift/transfer and what they can safely lift/transfer. If in doubt, seek advice or get help.

**Put down, then adjust.** If precise positioning of the individual/load is necessary, put the individual/load down first, then slide to the desired position.

#### **Related Policies and Procedures:**

- Philosophy (A-001)
- Confidentiality (A-003)
- Privacy (A-004)
- Use of Agency Equipment/Electronic Communication Technologies (B-006)
- Accessibility Policy (B-009)
- Duty of Care (B-010)
- Code of Conduct (B-011)
- Behaviour Support Policy (C-002)
- Abuse (C-004)
- Use of Physical Restraints (C-005)
- Serious Occurrence (C-006)
- Communication Book (C-007)
- Orientation for People Supported (C-011)
- Medical Care of People Supported (C-012)
- Bathing and Showering Supervision of Persons Supported Policy (C-014)
- Health and Safety Policy Statement D-001
- Emergency Policy D-003
- Critical Injury (D-006)
- Bullying, Harassment and Workplace Violence (D-007)
- Pandemic Policy (D-008)
- Preventative Maintenance Policy (D-009)
- Musculoskeletal Disorders Awareness Policy (D-010)
- First Aid Policy & Procedure (D-011)
- Working Alone Policy (D-012)
- Infection Control Policy and Procedures (D-013)
- Hazard/Risk Policy and Procedures (D-014)
- Health & Safety Orientation Policy (D-015)
- Location Health and Safety Representatives Policy (D-016)

- Ladder Safety Policy and Procedures (D-017)
- Sharps Policy and Procedures (D-018)
- Manual Handling Policy (D-019)
- Slips, Trips and Falls Prevention Policy (D-020)
- Workplace Inspection Policy (D-021)
- Employee and Volunteer Orientation Policy (E-005)
- Professional Development/Training Policy (E-006)
- Individual Consultation Policy (E-007)
- Employee Performance Appraisal Policy (E-008)
- Vehicle Use (E-009)
- Employee Performance Standards (E-011)
- Disciplinary Policy (E-012)
- Early and Safe Return to Work Policy (E-016)

**Other Related Agency Documents:**

Community Living-Central Huron Occupational Health and Safety Document.