

## Manual of Administration

<b>TOPIC:</b> Health and Safety	<b>SUBJECT:</b> Transfers, Lifts, Ramps and Wheelchairs	<b>Code:</b> HS195
		<b>Date of Issue:</b> March 2004
		<b>Revised:</b> May 2009
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**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 at least through 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 business 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 it is not appropriate, do not perform the transfer or lift, or do not use the ramp. Ask another support worker for assistance, or if 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 business location. Do not attempt to install or remove a temporary ramp yourself. Removable ramp must be removed when supporting ambulatory individuals and the steps are to be used.
3. 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 that ramps are used properly in all businesses and in public areas, when required.
  - Ensure furniture is arranged to allow easy access.
  - Ensure the lighting is adequate to perform a safe transfer or lift.

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### **Lifts and Transfers:**

1. 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. Tighten your abdominal and buttock muscles and use your leg muscles to lift in order to protect your spine from injury.
3. Move your whole body, including your feet, in the direction of the transfer or lift. Do not rotate or twist your spine.
4. Wear appropriate clothing and footwear to allow unrestricted movements.
5. Ensure the individual is transferred or lifted the shortest possible distance.
6. Never grasp an individual by the arms. This could result in shoulder injury to the individual being supported.
7. 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.
8. Postpone the task if the person you are supporting is restless or is experiencing involuntary movements.
9. The dignity of the person you are supporting is important. Transfers and lifts should be performed with this in mind.

### **Ramps:**

1. When supporting a person in a wheelchair down a ramp, hold wheelchair handles and walk backwards, pulling the chair down the ramp, stepping carefully, and using leg muscles and keeping your back straight .
2. Once off the ramp, support the person to face forward.
3. When supporting a person in a wheelchair up a ramp, use the wheelchair handles and push in a forward position.

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4. When supporting ambulatory individuals that cannot safely use stairs, the following are acceptable depending on the width of the ramp and based on the needs of the individual:
  - a) Side by side: individual to use railing for support, workers are acting as additional support. The work must support themselves by holding one rail while at the same time offering their arm as support to the person.
  - b) Backward: worker to walk backwards in front of the person, the Person you are supporting is to use the railing for support, both railings if they are accessible.
  
5. When supporting ambulatory individuals who use walkers, the individual should be supported to use a ramp. The worker is to walk backwards, stepping carefully and using their leg muscles and keeping their back straight. The worker is to support the person by walking backwards and by holding one rail while at the same time placing one hand firmly on the front of the walker.

**Manager:**

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