

Factors Leading to Injuries at Long Term Care Facilities

Nursing and Residential Care Facilities:

Nursing and residential care facilities provide living assistance combined with nursing, supervisory and other types of care as required by the residents. The residential care provided is a mix of health services, skilled nursing, nutrition, physical therapy, mental health, and social services. (NAICS-623XXX, SIC-805X).

The NCDOL Occupational Safety and Health Division has a Special Emphasis Program (SEP) for inspections of long term care (LTC) facilities. This SEP, which is detailed in the current revision of Operational Procedures Notice (OPN) 132, focuses on the major hazards prevalent in LTC facilities: ergonomic stressors relating to resident handling; exposure to blood and other potentially infectious materials (OPIM); and slips, trips and falls. In addition, this SEP also focuses on worker exposure to tuberculosis and workplace violence.

Locations Where Most Hazards Occur:

- + Health care areas
- + Bathrooms
- + Common areas
- + Kitchens
- + Laundry

Questions for Identifying and Abating Unsafe Conditions:

- + Is there a hazard?
- + How can the hazard be addressed?
- + Can the hazard be eliminated?
- + Can the hazard be minimized?
- + Can policies and/or procedures be implemented to prevent the recurrence of the hazard?

29 CFR 1910 North Carolina

General Industry Standards:

- 1910.22—Walking-Working Surfaces
- 1910.132—Personal Protective Equipment
- 1910.1030—Bloodborne Pathogens

Resources:

www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/ergonomics/

Ergonomics and Musculoskeletal Disorders

www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/dosh_publications/backinj.pdf

A Back Injury Prevention Guide for Health Care Providers

www.osha.gov/SLTC/nursinghome/index.html

OSHA Safety and Health Topics: Nursing Homes and Personal Care Facilities

www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/nursinghome/index.html

Occupational Hazards in Long Term Care: OSHA Nursing Home eTool

www.osha.gov/ergonomics/guidelines/nursinghome/index.html

OSHA Safety and Health Topics: Ergonomics: Guidelines for Nursing Homes

[https://aohp.org/aohp/TOOLSforyourwork/](https://aohp.org/aohp/TOOLSforyourwork/PublicationsforYourPractice/BeyondGettingStarted.aspx)

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Beyond Getting Started:

A Resource Guide for Implementing a Safe Patient Handling Program in Acute Care Settings

www.labor.nc.gov

N.C. Department of Labor website with links to the Consultative Services and Education, Training and Technical Assistance Bureaus

This resource document is not all inclusive and is only intended to provide guidance and should be used in conjunction with other requirements and the NCDOL standards.

Follow NCDOL on



1-800-625-2267 ❖ www.labor.nc.gov

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Hazards and Leading Injuries at Long Term Care Facilities



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Commissioner of Labor

Common Hazards:

Overexertion, Strains and Sprains

Body Parts Affected:

- + Back
- + Shoulders
- + Hand/wrist/fingers

Identifying Hazards:

- + Unsteady residents; lack of maneuvering room; unassisted resident lifting; improper use of lifting equipment; aggressive residents; poorly maintained equipment; staff rushing through job tasks.



Controlling Hazards:

Appropriate policies and procedures for assisting residents may include:

- + Conduct periodic mobility needs assessments for each resident.
- + Specify the lifting equipment needed for each resident based on assessment.
- + Foster a “no lift” environment.
- + Encourage and train employees to ask for assistance when needed.
- + Ensure that lifting equipment is kept in good repair and readily accessible.
- + Train employees on the proper use of lifting devices.
- + Determine the “root cause” of hazards. Use the findings to prevent recurrence.

Slips, Trips and Falls

Body Parts Affected:

- + Back
- + Shoulders
- + Hand/wrist/fingers
- + Knees
- + Ankles

Identifying Hazards:

- + Wet floors; inadequate cleaning schedule; unannounced spills; obstructed aisle ways; hazard cones and/or signs not in use; improper footwear; carpet damage such as tears, strings and/or waves; electrical cords in walking areas.



Appropriate housekeeping policies and procedures may include:

- + Clean up spills immediately. If unable to do so, then report the spill promptly.
- + Use “wet floor” signs when the floor is wet; take them down when floor is dry.
- + Clean one side of a hallway at a time, leaving the other side dry for traffic.
- + Use slip-resistant floor coatings in kitchens and bathing facilities.
- + Wear sturdy shoes with good traction.
- + Use handrails when walking on stairs.
- + Do not use aisles for storage.
- + Watch for proper placement of electrical cords.
- + Repair or replace damaged carpet.



Injuries From Contaminated Needles and Other Sharps

Body Parts Affected:

- + Hand/wrist/fingers

Identifying Hazards:

- + Overfilled sharps containers; inconvenient locations for sharps containers; improper disposal of sharps; recapping needles; IV connectors that use needles; disposable razors.



Appropriate needlestick prevention policies and procedures may include:

- + Use safety engineered needles, syringes lancets and IV connectors.
- + Train employees on the proper use and disposal of sharps.
- + Train employees never to recap needles (unless allowed by a procedure using engineering controls or a one-handed method).
- + Locate sharps containers so that they are readily available.
- + Replace sharps containers when they become two-thirds full.
- + Inform employees about procedures to follow if they get stuck or cut by a contaminated sharp (e.g., needle or lancet).

