Safe Patient Handling

Purpose:
To provide guidance for the reduction risk of injury to patients and employees through the use of safe patient handling equipment and practices.

Scope:
This policy applies to employees who provide physical care to patients including, but not limited to, Nursing, Radiology, Surgery, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Clinic Operations, General Service.

Definitions:

Patient Handling Tasks – Tasks that have a risk of musculoskeletal injury to staff and/or a risk of injury to patients. Tasks include, but are not limited to, transferring or repositioning patients, bathing patients in bed, dressing patients, lifting limbs, tasks with long durations and other tasks associated with using an employee’s physical strength to accomplish the task.

Root Cause Analysis – A process improvement and error/defect prevention tool that examines individual elements and processes within a system in order to identify the reasons for unwanted process variation, and how to eliminate or control them.

Safe Patient Handling – A process, based on scientific evidence on causes of injuries, that uses safe patient handling equipment rather than people to perform patient handling tasks. This process also reduces the risk of injury to patients.

Safe Patient Handling Aids – Equipment used to assist in the performance of patient handling tasks. Handling aids include, but are not limited to, gait belts with handles, stand assist aids, sliding boards and surface friction-reducing devices.

Safe Patient Handling Committee – A committee established to assist in the management of the safe patient handling program, composed of no less than 50% non-managerial nurses or other direct care staff, with proportional representation of non-managerial direct patient care workers who are covered by a collective bargaining agreement. Members of the committee are compensated by Mayo for all hours spent on committee business.

Safe Patient Handling Equipment – Stationary and portable mechanical lift/assist equipment and other patient handling aides used to assist in patient handling tasks. Equipment includes, but is not limited to, ceiling lifts, portable lifts, and portable stand assist lifts.

Policy Statements:
1. Manual patient handling will be avoided whenever reasonable.

2. Safe patient handling aids and equipment will be used to perform patient handling tasks, except when use of equipment places the patient at undue risk of harm, such as during certain medical emergency.

3. Departments will ensure the provision of staffing levels sufficient to support safe patient handling practices.

4. Departments will ensure employees take steps to protect themselves, their co-workers and patients during patient handling tasks.

**Procedure Statements**

Departments where employees perform patient handling tasks will implement and maintain processes that include:

1. Assessment of hazards with regard to patient handling
   - Assessments to identify patient handling tasks and to evaluate safe patient handling aids and equipment needs.
   - Written procedures that describe when and how to use safe patient handling aids and equipment.

2. Acquisition of Safe Patient Handling Equipment
   - Acquisition of and ready access to appropriate safe patient handling aids and equipment purchased in accordance with established equipment criteria.
   - Identification of acceptable storage locations for patient handling equipment.

3. Training in the Use of Safe Patient Handling Equipment
   - Initial/orientation training
   - Periodic training and verification of competencies for employees who use this equipment.

4. Management of Change
   - Procedures to ensure that plans for facility modifications and construction projects include evaluation and consideration of the installation or use of safe patient handling equipment.

5. Program evaluation
   - Periodic evaluation of work area compliance with approved safe patient handling procedures.

**Responsibilities:**

**Employees**

- Identify new as well as ongoing patient needs for assistance to ensure safe patient handling and movement.
- Use safe patient handling aids or equipment in accordance with procedures when performing patient handling tasks.
- Notify their supervisor of any injury/incident sustained while performing patient handling tasks and complete an Employee Incident Report.
- Report injuries or incidents involving patients promptly through the Patient Event Reporting Website.
- Attend training and maintain competence in the use of safe patient handling aids and equipment; advise supervisor of any unmet training/re-training needs.
- Know how to locate and obtain safe patient handling aids and equipment.
- Remove from service and notify their supervisor of any safe patient handling aids and equipment that needs repair or does not work properly.
Supervisors

• Ensure safe patient handling aids and equipment are readily accessible for employees.
• Ensure safe patient handling aids and equipment are purchased in accordance with established equipment criteria.
• Ensure work area specific safe patient handling procedures are implemented to support this policy.
• Ensure safe patient handling equipment is maintained and repaired by Facilities Operations, as needed.
• Ensure safe patient handling aids are maintained and disposed of when deemed appropriate.
• Ensure employees are trained on the use of any permanently installed overhead ceiling lifts or work area safe patient handling aids and equipment.
• Ensure employees know how to obtain and are trained on the use of safe patient handling aids or equipment not located in the work area.
• Review employee incidents and ensure performance of an appropriate root cause analysis to prevent recurrence of employee injuries/incidents.
• Consult with Safety on challenging patient handling tasks or in unique situations where safe patient handling aids or equipment are ineffective.

Facilities Project Services

• Consider the installation and use of safe patient handling equipment during planning of construction and remodeling projects in areas where patients are handled.

Facilities Operations

• Load test permanently installed overhead ceiling lifts per the manufacturer’s recommendations.
• Maintain ceiling lifts and other safe patient handling equipment in accordance with manufacturer’s recommendations.

Safety

• Assist work areas in identifying risks related to patient handling tasks.
• Assist departments or work areas with training on the use of safe patient handling aids and equipment.
• Provide consultation to work areas with challenging patient handling tasks.
• Review employee incident reports and provide guidance to supervisors in performing a root cause analysis to prevent recurrence of injuries/incidents.

Safe Patient Handling Committee

• Delegate responsibility to other responsible parties in order to ensure safe patient handling.
• Maintain criteria for the purchase, use and maintenance of safe patient handling aids and equipment.
• Establish, monitor, and recommend as appropriate institutional policies and practices for safe patient handling, including space planning.
• Review and assess, no less often than annually:
  ▪ Hazardous aspects of patient handling tasks
  ▪ Patient-handling related employee and patient injury patterns and trends
  ▪ New methods, equipment, and techniques to reduce the risk of injury to patients and employees from patient handling
  ▪ Adequacy of training course content and effectiveness of the training program
  ▪ Other relevant information bearing on the risk of injury to patients and employees from patient handling

Resources: 182.6551 – 182.6554, Minnesota Statutes, Minnesota Safe Patient Handling Act