

# Safe Work

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## Practices and Procedures

# Introduction

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Safe workplaces are created by people who care - caring individuals, like yourself, who work together as a team.

Everyone at a workplace, including employers, supervisors/managers, and employees, has a shared responsibility for maintaining a safe and healthy workplace as part of their work. Your health and safety in the workplace is protected by the Occupational Health and Safety Act and Regulations that apply to your company.

Workers in the Health and Community Services sectors face diverse hazards. They range from driving hazards in visiting home-care clients, to the many ergonomic challenges that come with the requirement to lift and transfer patients, to biological hazards, and many more. In Nova Scotia, the Health and Community Services sectors have the highest rates of injury.

To eliminate injuries, each of us must take personal responsibility for reducing incidents. A focus on Key Safe Behaviours (Safe Work Practices) and a commitment to doing your job safely can make this happen.

This booklet is designed as an easy reference guide to:

- Visually demonstrate Key Safe Behaviours (KSB) we all need to practice daily.
- Help us to recognize positive behaviours – working safely.
- Coach and correct when we observe unsafe behaviours.

This booklet does not replace your employer's OHS program and policies. It is a guide that provides information to help reduce and eliminate injuries at your workplace.

**Carry it with you always.**

# Manager/Supervisor Due Diligence

Consider these 9 points – Are you a duly diligent supervisor?

## **Knowledge of Legal Obligations:**

*Do you know relevant Health and Safety Acts and Regulations?*

## **Knowledge of Workplace Hazards:**

*Do you communicate possible hazards and ways to control them?*

## **Correct Hazards:**

*Do you take action to address workplace hazards?*

## **Policies and Procedures:**

*Do you know where corporate health and safety policies are and do you understand and communicate them?*

## **Orientation and Training:**

*Can you demonstrate that your worker has the ability, knowledge and skills (competent person) to perform his/her work tasks safely?*

## **Supervisory Monitoring:**

*Do you watch colleagues' activities and safety conditions in the workplace on an ongoing basis?*

## **Communication:**

*Do you promote and help 2-way communication with your colleagues about safety?*

## **Enforcement with Discipline:**

*Do you enforce policies and procedures with evidence of discipline?*

## **Documentation:**

*Are notes, records and/or documents easily available in support of the steps noted above?*

## Manager's Responsibilities

- Ensure equipment, materials and the work environment is safe.
- Establish safe work policies and procedures for hazardous work and ensure they are followed.
- Provide orientation to the company's safety policy and provide safety training on hazard information, equipment use and operational procedures.
- Ensure that all required personal protective equipment is available and is appropriate to the hazard.
- Ensure that all workers who use personal protective equipment are trained in the need for and use, care and maintenance of any personal protective equipment they use.
- Consult with employees on workplace health and safety issues.
- Establish a health and safety committee (if you have 20 or more people) or a safety representative (if you have 5-19 people).
- Make everyone accountable for their safety performance.

## Employee's Responsibilities

- Comply with company rules and procedures.
- Wear personal protective equipment, as required.
- Use machinery, equipment and materials only as authorized.
- Follow safe work practices, including a Job Safety Analysis.
- Report hazards, unsafe conditions or actions.
- Report all incidents and near misses.

## Employee Rights

Under the OHS Act, the Internal Responsibility System (IRS) gives workers three key rights that empower them to ensure health and safety for themselves and others at the workplace.

### **The Right to Know:**

Employees are entitled to information on issues that affect their health and safety or that of another person in the workplace.

### **The Right to Participate:**

Employees can participate on Health and Safety Committees or be a Safety Representative, report unsafe conditions and voice concerns or opinions on any issue that affects their health and safety or that of the workplace.

### **The Right to Refuse:**

Employees have the right to refuse work that is not safe for you or another worker.

# Hazards, Incidents and Investigations

## **Incident Reports and Investigations:**

Incident investigations give you the immediate and root cause(s) of an incident and remedial action required. Proper incident reports and investigations can be the benchmark to learn how to avoid the incident and prevent injury from happening in the future.

## **What should I do if I notice a hazard?**

You should report it immediately to your supervisor. You do not need to wait for an inspection team to come by. In fact, health and safety legislation requires employees to report hazards to their supervisor.

The immediate hazard reporting process allows employees to report hazardous conditions or practices as they notice them. This procedure allows for prompt reporting and subsequent corrective action without waiting for the next round of regular inspections.

Hazards can be reported verbally or by completing a simple form made available by your employer.

## **When should I report incidents?**

It is extremely important to report incidents right away, no matter how minor they may be. Even if the injury is minor or if there is no apparent initial injury and you feel it is not worth reporting, the incident must be documented. The reason for this is that minor injuries can worsen over time and become more of an issue, or an ergonomic injury can become apparent several days or months after the initial cause. If this happens and there was no report of the incident, it may be difficult to argue that it happened. Furthermore, reporting an incident right away will allow for corrective action to be taken sooner, possibly preventing others from becoming injured, and ensure the details are accurate as the event will still be fresh in your mind.

## **How do I report an incident? What forms need to be completed? Who is involved in the reporting process?**

The injured person or best witness must inform their supervisor of the incident as soon as possible. Complete a Hazard/Incident Report Form with your supervisor within 24 hours for all injuries and near miss incidents. If first aid was administered, make sure first aid fills out the First Aid Record form. If medical aid was sought through your physician, emergency physician or walk-in clinic, please advise them that the injury occurred at work. You will then need to inform your supervisor that you sought medical attention and that they will need to complete the Employer's Report of Injury. This must be completed by the injured employee's supervisor. This can be done using the company's claim forms. If an investigation is required, the Incident Investigation Report will be completed by those conducting the investigation.

## **When are incident investigations required?**

Incidents that must be investigated include those which:

- Resulted in any serious injury (required medical treatment) or the death of a worker.
- Did not involve injury to a worker, or involved only minor injury not requiring medical treatment, but had a potential for causing serious injury to a worker.
- Involved a major structural failure or collapse of a building, bridge, tower, crane, hoist, temporary construction support system or excavation, involved the major release of a hazardous substance.

These investigations must be initiated by the employer immediately.

## **Why are investigations required for these situations?**

Investigations are an important part of due diligence. Investigations will help to uncover the root cause(s) of the incident and provide those involved with better information about how to correct and prevent the situation for the future.

## **Who is responsible for conducting the investigation?**

Investigations will be led by the Safety Officer and/or the Manager of Occupational Health and Safety with the participation of a supervisor representative and an employee representative.

## **How are incident investigations performed?**

- Determine the root and contributing cause(s) of the accident/incident.
- Identify any unsafe conditions, acts or procedures that contributed in any manner to the incident, including unsafe acts, personal factors, ergonomic risk factors, improper procedure or attire, misuse/malfunction of equipment and training/supervisor issues.
- Recommend corrective action(s), time lines for completion, assign personnel, in order to prevent recurrences of similar incidents.

## **Workplace Violence and Harassment**

Statistics Canada estimates that one in five violent incidents in Canada, including physical assault, sexual assault and robbery, occur in the workplace. These acts can have severe consequences.

Workplace violence can affect the safety and security of every employee and business owner. It claims a high personal cost from the emotional trauma and physical injury experienced by the victims, their families and co-workers.

Workplace violence also includes bullying.

Know your rights and responsibilities. You have a duty to report all incidents of violence in a workplace to your employer.

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# Aggressive Client/Resident

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## **Safe Work Practices:**

- Prior to commencing care, assess your client's history, care plan, current communications (such as incident reports, especially the reported causes and solutions) and the client's mood before you start your duties.
- Be aware of what factors trigger, calm or otherwise affect a client's behavior.
- Tell your client what you are going to do before you do it.
- When appropriate, keep space between you and your client.
- Know where the exits are - avoid letting your client come between you and an exit from the room.
- Be aware that your client may become more aggressive when you are assisting with personal care or toileting.
- Be sensitive of cultural or language barriers.
- Reassess whether the task needs to be performed immediately or whether it could wait until the situation has calmed down.

## **If behaviour is escalating (e.g., becoming more agitated, combative, etc.):**

- Stay calm and do not argue or raise your voice.
- Try to leave at least two metres (six feet) between you and the person and stay off to one side.
- Watch for signs that the person may strike out (for example, a reddening or other change in skin color, fast breathing, finger pointing, yelling).
- If appropriate, reassure the person that his or her concerns will be dealt with as soon as possible.
- Tell your supervisor about the situation as soon as it is safe to do so.



# Allergens

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## Wearing Shoe Covers When Exposed To Excessively Soiled Floors

### Safe Work Practices:

- Always follow routine practices
- Wear anti-skid shoe covers when:
  - Floors are excessively soiled and would result in having to discard shoes; or
  - Cleaning floor areas soiled with feces when client is diagnosed with C Difficile.
- To don and remove anti-skid shoe covers:
  1. Pull each shoe cover over entire shoe, with the elastic ring fitting around/near your ankle.
  2. Put on disposable gloves and remove shoe covers by grasping inside of shoe cover. Do not touch outside of the shoe cover.
  3. Discard shoe covers in a plastic bag, then remove and discard gloves. Tie bag to prevent contact. Dispose in garbage can lined with a leak-proof bag. Do not walk across contaminated floor to dispose of shoe covers.

# Bathing Clients/Residents

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## Safe Work Practices:

- Plan the bathing process. Assemble everything you need, and position all equipment.
- Carefully test the water temperature with your lower arm (inner wrist) and/or take the water temperature with a probe thermometer before the client enters the bath or shower.
- If the water temperature feels hotter than the required temperature and there is a risk of scalding, do not proceed. Provide for the client's immediate comfort and safety e.g., wrap in a towel or bathrobe.
- Before you help client into the tub, seat them on a transfer bench or shower stool, and lather the far side of their body. Place their feet on a stool or the edge of the tub and lather them.
- Sit on a stool, the side of the tub, or on the toilet seat (if it's close) to keep your back more upright and reduce how much you have to reach and bend.
- Handrails on bathtub walls should be installed for any client with stability issues.
- Take short breaks to rest your lower back (e.g., stand up straight and arch your back slightly backwards).
- If using a wheelchair in a small bathroom, pull the wheelchair from the front so that you don't have to climb around it.
- Always use non-slip mats in the tub or shower, and non-slip mats outside the tub or shower to catch drips.
- Do not leave any client who requires assistance in the bathtub or shower alone.

## Bathing Clients/Residents in Bed

- Try not to twist, bend, or reach for water basins.
- Place basins on stools or tables at a comfortable height and close to where you are working.

# Body Mechanics

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## Safe Work Practices:

- Good body mechanics means practicing good posture throughout the day.
- Keep your back in the neutral position - not too curved and not too flat.
- If you must stay in one position for long periods of time, take regular breaks to stretch and restore the neutral position of your back.
- Keep your ear, shoulder, hip, and ankle in a line.
- Avoid locking your knees while standing. Place one foot on a low stool if you must stand in one position for a long time. Alternate feet.
- Avoid sitting in one position for more than an hour at a time. Get up or change positions often.

## General safe-lifting rules:

- Do not perform the lift if you are not certain that you can handle the load safely.
- Assess the load. Do not lift a load weighing more than 35 lbs. without assistance.
- Prepare to lift by warming up the muscles.
- Use lift aid or device (dollies, trolleys), if available.
- Stand close to the load, facing the way you intend to move.
- Use a wide stance to gain balance.
- Ensure a good grip on the load.
- Keep arms straight.
- Tighten abdominal muscles.
- Tuck chin into the chest.
- Initiate the lift with body weight using upper legs with knees bent.
- Lift the load close to the body.
- Lift smoothly without jerking.
- Avoid twisting and side bending while lifting.
- When two or more persons are lifting or carrying a load, handling should be prearranged. The person with the heaviest load should coordinate all the effort of the others involved in the handling technique.

# Cell Phone Usage

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## Safe Work Practices:

- Cellular telephones and other communications devices may only be used when in compliance with the NS Motor Vehicle Act, Section 100D (1&2), i.e. to report an immediate emergency situation.
- If you must answer a call or text, carefully pull over to a safe area on the side of the road. Place your vehicle in park and ensure your four-way flashers are on BEFORE operating the device.
- If you have voice mail, allow the call to be recorded. Return the call when safely parked.
- Keep your cell phone battery charged for emergency purposes.
- Do not make notes or look up information while driving.
- Regularly clean and disinfect your phone according to the manufacturer's instructions to prevent the spread of disease causing microorganisms.

# Cleaning Bathrooms

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## Safe Work Practices:

- Use equipment and cleaning chemicals that require less effort to use (e.g. a long handled bristle brush) to remove dirt off the floor.
- Use a non-slip mat, if required, to get inside the shower or bath for cleaning.
- Be trained in appropriate techniques including:
  - Using chemicals to assist with cleaning. Follow manufacturer's directions for proper use.
  - Rinsing with hand held shower or tap with attachable handheld shower hose.
  - Minimizing time spent kneeling – use mops or long handled squeegee to reach difficult areas.
  - Kneeling rather than bending or squatting – use a folded towel or kneepad when kneeling.
  - Using one hand on the bath to support weight when cleaning and rising when kneeling.
  - Keeping an open palm by using a larger cleaning pad.
- Clean all equipment, allow to dry then store in a designated area.
- Always maintain good personal hygiene. Wash hands when you complete the task. Do not wear contaminated gloves to complete other tasks outside the bathroom.

## Floor Surfaces and Footwear

- Mop surfaces dry after having cleaned the bathroom.
- Ensure footwear is suitable (e.g. non-slip, comfortable, and supportive). Replace footwear promptly if current footwear is not appropriate or comfortable.

# Client Home Layout

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## Safe Work Practices:

- The care team, client and family should be involved in achieving a safe work area.
- Report any issues or concerns about the layout (inaccessibility, space design, hazards, etc.) in a client's home preventing you from performing client handling tasks safely to your Supervisor immediately.
- Have sufficient space around the bed so you can provide care effectively and safely.
- If client uses a lift or slider, there should be at least 2-3 feet on both sides of the bed.
- Furniture in rooms should not restrict your ability to weight shift and maintain a neutral spine during client handling task.
- Furniture and equipment, in particular beds, should be adjustable/moveable to best ensure safe client handling.
- Clear unsafe items, such as electrical cords and loose floor rugs, from all mobility and transfer paths.
- Make sure assisting area is away from any protruding objects from the wall, such as a TV, shelf, pictures or other such hazards.
- Lighting in the home should be adequate for both client and staff so they can see during transfers.
- Wet, highly polished, or otherwise slippery floors can contribute to slip and fall hazards.
- Bathrooms should be set up with sufficient space to perform Safe Transfer and Client Handling procedures safely.
- Install grab bars in the bathroom(s) for staff and client safety.
- Store client handling equipment out of the way and do not obstruct pathways.
- Hallways should be clear and allow lots of space for mobility equipment and space to walk.

# Collecting Soiled Laundry

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## Safe Work Practices:

- Wear puncture proof gloves and take precautions to prevent injuries caused by needles, syringes or other sharp objects.
- Bag all soiled linen at the location where it was used. Linen should never be rinsed or sorted in patient-care areas.
- If using laundry bags, do not overfill bags. Fill only to  $\frac{3}{4}$  full and tie shut.
- Carry filled laundry bags with both hands.
- Do not swing and throw laundry bags.
- Only carry one laundry bag at a time and do not overfill laundry carts with bags.
- Transport laundry bags in spring loaded carts and ensure the soiled laundry carts are stored away from clean laundry in designated areas to avoid cross contamination with clean laundry.
- Wash hands and other skin surfaces immediately if contaminated with blood or other bodily fluids. Hands should also be washed after removing gloves.
- If your clothing becomes contaminated with blood or other bodily fluids, you should remove it and keep separate from other clothing until properly laundered.



# Compression Stockings

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## Safe Work Practices:

### Application technique:

1. Apply stockings when the client first gets up out of bed in the morning before edema accumulates in the limb(s).
2. Wash your hands and remove rings.
3. Explain to the client what you are going to do.
4. Collect supplies (stockings, rubber gloves).
5. Wash client's legs and feet as indicated on their care plan. Do not use powder or creams on the legs. Maintain proper body mechanics.
6. Inspect client's feet and legs for any signs that indicate the stockings should not be applied, i.e. any open wound.
7. Gather the stocking and ease the stocking over the toes, foot and heel. Center the client's heel in the heel pocket. Rubber gloves should be used to gently "milk" the stocking up the limb. Avoid pulling and stretching the fabric of the stocking.
8. A Knee high stocking should extend above the curvature of the calf but be two finger-widths below the knee.
9. Stockings should never be rolled down if too long.
10. Thigh high stockings should be applied so that the upper thigh rests in the groin area, as added by physician as length may vary.
11. Thigh high stockings with a waist belt should be applied so that the side panels are at the hipbone. The smooth side of the waist belt should rest against the client's skin. Fasten the belt straps to the stockings and adjust the belt buckle so that it is tight enough to just hold the stockings in place.
12. Ensure that the stockings are not wrinkled or twisted. Adjust the stockings at the toes to ensure they can move freely.
13. Wash your hands and document care as instructed by your agency.

### Removal technique:

To remove the stockings grasp the top of the stocking with both hands and pull smoothly down to the foot. Support the foot with one hand and pull the stocking over the heel with the other hand.

# Doing Laundry

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## Safe Work Practices:

- Wear gloves when handling soiled laundry.
- Use squat/semi squat-when picking up soiled laundry, loading washer and dryer.
- Avoid prolonged bending when taking clothes out of washer/dryer.
- Ensure that equipment is used as per its manufacturer's instructions.
- Do not overload machine.
- Use detergent that is rated as safe and read Safety Data Sheet.
- Use utensil to handle detergent. Wash hands if there is skin contact with detergent. Avoid so that detergent does not come in contact with eyes.
- Lift wet laundry out of machine in smaller bundles (don't lift too much at once).
- Put clothes basket at waist height (on bench or in trolley) to prevent excessive bending.
- Remove lint from dryers regularly.
- Do not leave iron on the ironing board.
- Turn iron off when not in use.

# Dressing Clients

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## Safe Work Practices:

- Keep your body upright. Shift your body weight using your legs when assisting the client to move.
- Start with the client's weaker side when putting on clothes.
- Help your client to lean forward when putting on shirts; this will relax the client's arms.
- Try to complete several tasks at the same time. For example, roll your client to place an incontinence pad, pull on a pant leg, and adjust a lift sling.
- Sit on a stool when assisting seated clients with their socks and shoes.

## Dressing Client in Bed

- Ensure that your client is as close to the side of the bed as possible.
- Remove obstacles from around the bed so you can position yourself closely.
- Sit on the bed, or put one knee up on it, to bring yourself closer.
- Place your client's lower legs on a small stool or other elevated surface to lift their thighs off the bed.

# Exposure to Bodily Fluids

**Significant exposure to blood or bodily fluids (where there is risk of infection) happens only in certain ways:**

- Puncturing one's skin with a sharp object (needle stick, razor, saw blade, knife, etc.) that is coated with blood or bodily fluids.
- When blood is splashed on to a mucous membrane (eyes, nose, mouth).
- When blood is splashed onto broken skin (cuts, eczema, other damaged skin).

When blood or bodily fluids come into contact with skin that is intact, this is not considered to be a risk for the spread of blood borne pathogens.

**If a worker has been exposed to blood or bodily fluids, the following steps should be taken:**

1. Flush the contacted area with water as soon as possible and report the incident to your supervisor and occupational health personnel/first aider.
2. ***If a significant exposure has occurred, seek medical attention immediately, preferably within two hours.*** Timely assessment is necessary for the initiation of preventative medication and/or vaccination.

**Safe Work Practices:**

- Assume that all bodily fluids are contaminated.
- Wear protective gloves while handling personal articles. Wear protective eyewear when handling grossly contaminated articles or cleaning up spills.
- Promptly clean benches, counters, tools and keyboards which have been contaminated with absorbent disposable material and disinfected with antimicrobial wipes.
- Clean floors with a disposable absorbent material and mop with diluted antimicrobial solution. If mops have been used in the cleanup, they should be thoroughly washed and dried before re-use.
- Remove clothing soiled with bodily fluids and launder in the usual fashion.
- Wash your hands with soap and water after handling contaminated items or cleaning up spills.

# Filling and Draining Cleaning Buckets

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## Safe Work Practices:

- Use hose to fill buckets to avoid lifting (if filling bucket from a sink). If hose is not available, use a basin or dump partially filled pails to fill the bucket.
- Avoid overfilling cleaning buckets. Fill to 2/3 full to reduce weight in buckets and spills over the sides.

## To lift bucket with 1 hand:

- Get close beside the bucket with feet in a staggered / walking stance.
- Bend knees and reach down to grasp the handle with one hand by bending knees rather than bending forward or sideways from the waist.
- Try to keep your back upright. Push up through the legs to lift. Lower the pail in the reverse order.

## To lift bucket with 2 hands:

- Get close to the bucket with feet on either side of the bucket.
  - Bend knees and reach down to grasp the handle with both hands by bending knees rather than bending from the waist.
  - Try to keep your back upright. Push through the legs to lift. Lower the pail in the reverse order.
  - Place bucket onto low cart or dolly if transporting and avoid jerky movements to prevent spilling.
- To dump buckets, tilt, if possible, next to a floor drain rather than lifting.
  - If only a sink is available, use a basin or pail to remove some of the water before lifting the pail to the sink with both hands and tilt it over the edge to drain.

# Fire Emergency

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## Safe Work Practices:

- You are not required to fight a fire. ONLY FIGHT THE FIRE IF IT IS SAFE TO DO SO.
- Alert everyone in the building to evacuate, go to the nearest phone, and dial 911.
- Keep a clear escape route – never put the fire between yourself and your exit.
- Once you are out of the house stay out! Never re-enter a burning building.
- Seek medical assistance, if necessary, for yourself or others.
- Notify your supervisor and document the incident as soon as safely possible.

## In a Home:

- Assess the situation.
- Ensure the immediate safety of all persons in the home.
- Remove all persons from burning home, if possible.
- If unable to remove client from burning home:
  1. Seal client's room.
  2. Place client as close to the window as possible.
  3. If your life is in danger, leave client in sealed room and exit building. Notify firemen of location.
- Dial 911 to report the fire emergency as soon as it is safe to do so.

## In an Apartment building:

- Assess the situation. If you are unable to extinguish the fire:
  1. Tell anyone to leave with you. Close all doors and do not lock them.
  2. Activate the building fire alarm system, Yell "fire".
  3. Do not use the elevator.
- If you hear a fire alarm:
  1. Check the door for heat and smoke.
  2. If there is no smoke, open the door a little and feel the air pressure for a hot draft.
  3. If you do not find smoke in corridor, exit the building.
  4. If you cannot exit safely, go back to the apartment and protect yourself and others.
- If you must remain in the client's apartment:
  1. Keep the door closed, but not locked.
  2. Stay in the apartment until you are rescued.
  3. If smoke enters your apartment, exit to balcony or go the nearest smoke-free area.

# Fire Extinguishers

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## Safe Work Practices:

- Know the location of all fire extinguishers.
- Ensure the fire extinguisher is appropriate for the type of fire (Class A, B, C, D, or K).
- Fire Extinguishers are only to be used for small or contained fires.
- After determining it is safe to try to extinguish the fire: Using the acronym 'PASS':
  - o Pull the pin at the top of the fire extinguisher.
  - o Aim the nozzle at the base of the fire, stand at least a metre away.
  - o Squeeze the lever slowly or pump the handle.
  - o Sweep from side to side at the base of the fire until the fire is completely out.
- A monthly check should be performed to ensure the gauge or pressure indicator shows the correct pressure. If not, the extinguisher should be recharged.
- The fire extinguisher should be inspected and certified annually by your fire equipment professional.



# Fire Safety

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## Safe Work Practices:

- Smoke detectors/fire alarm should be installed and tested on a regular basis.
- Know the location of all fire extinguishers.
- Know your fire exits. Develop and test a fire escape plan.
- Store flammables properly. Ensure proper labelling of materials.
- Keep combustible material away from sources of ignition.
- Store combustible materials in approved containers only.
- Check all exits and ensure they are not blocked by furniture or other items.
- Smoke in approved smoking areas only. Discard butts in approved containers only.
- Be trained in the proper use of fire extinguishers. Your supervisor should keep current records of employee training.

# Folding Laundry

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## Safe Work Practices:

- Grasp laundry with your entire hand (power grip) rather than just your fingers (pinch grip).
- Reduce repetitive twisting:
  - Face the laundry cart, grasp laundry, and then take small steps to turn to place it on the table.
- Adjust tables to just below elbow height for folding.
- If tables cannot be adjusted, raise tables to fit the average taller worker and provide a removable safe work platform for a shorter worker.
- Avoid leaning your legs against the edge of the table when folding laundry.
- Stand on anti-fatigue matting when standing for extended periods at a table.
- Avoid holding laundry up high with your arms.
- Keep elbows low or by your side.
- Do not sort and move laundry at floor level.

## To reduce repetitive motions when folding laundry:

- Change working positions frequently. Don't spend too much time on one task.
- Alternate between the items being folded, for example, switch between linens and towels.
- Take micro breaks (30 seconds – 1 minutes) to stretch or walk during longer tasks.

# Food Safety

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## Safe Work Practices:

- Set refrigerator at 4°C (40°F) or lower and freezer at -18°C (0°F) or lower. The temperature danger zone for food is between 4°C (40°F) to 60°C (140°F).
- Keep hot foods hot (above 140°F) and cold foods cold (below 40°F) to prevent bacteria growth.
- Refrigerate foods within two hours of purchase or preparation (one hour if the temperature is higher than 90 degrees).
- When reheating food, make sure it's cooked to a temperature of at least 74°C (165°F). Eat cooked leftovers within four days.
- Store deli meats in the refrigerator and use them within four days or, preferably, two to three days after opening.
- Store washed, cut fruit and sliced vegetables in the refrigerator.
- Avoid overstocking the refrigerator, so that cool air can circulate effectively.
- Make sure that cooked foods don't come into contact with any food that hasn't been cooked.
- Cook food completely, using a clean thermometer to measure the temperature.
- Place raw meat, poultry, fish and seafood in sealed containers or plastic bags and store these items on the bottom shelf of your refrigerator.
- Cook raw meat, poultry, fish, and seafood no more than two to three days after purchasing. If you do not intend to cook it within this time, it should be frozen.
- The safest way to thaw food, especially raw meat, poultry, fish or seafood, is in the refrigerator. Always defrost food in the refrigerator, in cold water or in the microwave - never at room temperature.
- Do not re-freeze thawed food.
- Wash your hands and clean and sanitize the sink, utensils, surfaces and dishes used when thawing the food.
- When in doubt, throw it out. If you are not sure that food has been prepared, served, or stored properly, throw it out. If food has been left out for more than two hours, throw it out.

# Footwear Safety

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## Safe Work Practices:

- Choose footwear based on the hazards that are present, such as a risk of objects falling onto or striking the foot, objects that may penetrate the bottom or side of the foot or possible exposure to corrosive or irritating substances.
- The sole tread pattern and sole compound are both important for slip-resistance.
- A shoe with a closed toe should be worn to protect the foot from injuries.
- A shoe with a closed back, provided with a firm heel cap, guarantees high stability.
- An anatomically formed insole can be used to help support the arch of the foot and absorb shocks/impacts.
- The shoe should be flat heeled: a heel of maximum 2cm in height has a positive effect on the body statics (posture and balance).
- The shoe material should be water-repellent, hard-wearing and easy to clean.

# Glove Removal Procedure

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## Safe Work Practices:

- With both hands gloved, grasp the outside of one glove at the top of the wrist.
- Peel off this first glove, peeling away from your body and from wrist to fingertips, turning the gloves inside out.
- Hold the gloves you just removed in your gloved hand.
- With your ungloved hand, peel off the second glove by inserting your fingers inside the glove at the top of the wrist.
- Turn the second glove inside out while tilting it away from your body, leaving the first glove inside the second.
- Dispose of the gloves following the safe work procedures. Do not reuse the gloves.
- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water as soon as possible after removing the gloves and before touching any object or surfaces.

# Hand Washing

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## **Safe Work Practices:**

### **Follow these steps to wash your hands the right way every time:**

- Remove any rings or other jewelry.
- Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
- Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
- Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the “Happy Birthday” song from beginning to end twice.
- Rinse your hands well under clean, running water.
- Turn off the taps/faucets with a paper towel.
- Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

### **If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer:**

- Apply the product to the palm of one hand (read the label to learn the correct amount).
- Rub your hands together.
- Rub the product over all surfaces of your hands and fingers until your hands are dry.

# Household Chemical Emergencies

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## **Safe Work Practices:**

Before using any hazardous product, make sure you are up to date with your WHMIS 2015 training.

## **When a chemical emergency occurs:**

- Look for the first aid information found on the supplier label of the product you are using.
- Call Poison Control if poison is ingested (1-800-565-8161). DO NOT attempt to vomit or eat or drink anything unless instructed to do so by Poison Control.

## **If a chemical gets into a person's eyes, immediately:**

1. Flush the eyes with clean lukewarm tap water for a minimum of 20 minutes by using the shower or faucet.
2. Remove contact lenses.
3. Administer first aid.

## **Chemical Burns to skin**

1. Pour clean, cool water over the burn for at least 20 minutes.
2. Loosely cover the burn with a sterile or clean non-adherent dressing.

## **If there is danger of a chemical fire or explosion, you should:**

1. Get out of the building immediately.
2. Once you are safely away from danger, call 911 from outside.
3. Stay away from the building to avoid breathing toxic fumes.

## **If you have been exposed to toxic chemicals, you should:**

1. Wash all body parts that may have been exposed to a toxic chemical.
2. Safely remove your clothing and discard.
3. If required and you are safely able to do so, go to the nearest medical facility. If this is not possible, dial 911 for assistance.
4. Take the chemical container with you to the medical facility.
5. Call your supervisor to report the incident.



# Household Chemical Safety

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You may be exposed to chemicals in four different ways:

1. **Inhalation** (Breathing the chemical).
2. **Ingestion** (Swallowing contaminated food, water or medication)
3. **Absorption** (Touching the chemical or coming into contact with clothing).
4. **Injection** (injection via needles or puncture of the skin)

## Safe Work Practices:

Read the entire product label before using any cleaning product.

- Look for the hazard warnings and know what each means.
- Know your local Poison Control number (1-800-565-8161).
- Always wear household rubber gloves whenever you are using commercial cleaning products.
- Protect your skin by wearing clothing that covers your arms and legs.
- Keep spray cleaners aimed away from your face and eyes.
- Keep pets and children away from the area that you are cleaning.
- Ensure you use the right cleaner and the right amount for the surface to be cleaned.
- Store all household cleaners in their original, labeled container and out of reach of children.
- NEVER mix cleaning products.
- Always wash your hands before eating or drinking after handling any chemical.

## Recognize the symptoms of chemical poisoning:

- Difficulty breathing
- Changes in skin color
- Dizziness
- Irritation of the eyes, skin, throat, or respiratory tract
- Nausea
- Headache or blurred vision
- Cramps or diarrhea
- Clumsiness or lack of coordination

# Infestation in Clients'/Residents' Homes (rodents, fleas, lice, insects)

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## Safe Work Practices:

If your client has a suspected infestation, **FIRST** call your supervisor to report it. **DO NOT ATTEMPT TO CLEAN UP** before contacting the office and asking your supervisor for guidance.

You are not responsible to handle devices used in rodent control, i.e. traps or poison. **NEVER** remove rodent droppings by sweeping or vacuuming. Call your supervisor to report if rodents or signs of rodents or other pests are present in your client's home.

Service to the client home should then be put on hold until the matter is resolved.

## How to recognize signs of infestation:

### Bed Bugs

Bed bugs like to get into small cracks and crevices near where people sleep. Other common locations are cracks and gaps behind wall outlets, floor molding, window and door molding and where carpet edges meet the wall. Signs of bed bugs include:

- Live or dead bed bugs.
- Skins cast off during the molting process.
- Small spots of reddish-black fecal material.
- Tiny cream-colored eggs usually found in dark crevices.
- Live bed bugs leave clusters of dark brown or black spots of dried excrement on infested surfaces. Bed bugs also exude a subtle, sweet, musty odor.

### Rodents (mice, rats)

Signs of mouse infestation include droppings (dark, tiny feces), gnawed plastic or furniture, tracks and rodent sightings. House mice also emit musky odors.

- Keep an eye out for rodent pellets, urine stains and any other signs that pests have been sneaking around. These are particularly dangerous and should not be handled without the use of gloves and a protective face mask.
- Gnawed food packaging. Torn, scratched or shredded food packaging often indicates that a pest has been nibbling at stored goods.
- Mouse nests are made from shredded fibers and other found materials such as bits of shredded paper, fabric or insulation. They are common in undisturbed areas such as shoeboxes and storage crates, under cabinets and other areas that are seldom accessed.
- Homeowners experiencing infestations may hear noises at night and smell the mouse urine in areas with poor ventilation.

## Fleas

Many signs can indicate flea activity:

- Pets scratching – a common indication would be pets that repeatedly scratch and groom themselves.
- Bites – people also may experience bites which leave behind itchy bite marks.
- Feces – flea dirt, the adult flea feces, looks similar to coarse ground black pepper and may be seen in pet beds, carpets, rugs and other areas where the animal host rests.
- Adult fleas – fleas are relatively easy to see in their adult stage.
- Flea eggs – the flea eggs, larvae and pupae are much more secretive and much less active and are found in out-of-the-way places like:
  - o Behind, under or in furniture
  - o In a pet's bedding
  - o Inside cracks and grooves in the floors
  - o In carpets

## Lice

Signs of a Lice Infestation may include:

- Skin irritations or sightings of small whitish bugs in the clothing or hair. Human head lice are often found behind the ears or near the hairline, at the base of the neck.
- Intense itching and rash caused by an allergic reaction to louse bites are common symptoms of body lice infestation.
- Body lice resemble head lice, though they make their homes in clothing rather than on the scalp. Body lice infestations are characterized by severe itchiness and red marks on the body.

# Making Beds

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## Safe Work Practices:

- Wear gloves when handling soiled linen.
- Clear the bed and surrounding areas of medical and other equipment before stripping the bed, where necessary.
- Remove clinical waste and soiled linen and place in appropriate container. Clean the bed according to established procedures, where necessary.
- Move bed away from the wall and/or furniture and clear obstructions.
- Avoid turning mattress or moving a bed alone.
- Ensure castors are fit with a lockable braking system to bed which is appropriate to floor surfaces to ensure ease of movement.
- Adjust the height of the bed to your hip height prior to making bed, if possible. Do not attempt to move bed alone if heavy and not on castors or gliders.
- Kneel instead of bending or squatting when tucking in sheets.
- Tuck in sheets and blankets at the end of the beds only, leaving sides untucked (if suitable and safe for the Client/Resident).
- Keep linen located nearby on the chair or table between hip and shoulder height.
- Unfold the sheet on the bed to avoid excessive throwing or 'flicking' actions.
- Always face the task you are working on front-on. Walk around the bed rather than reaching over it. If you must work from one side, keep one hand on the bed for support.
- Slide/push the sheets under the mattress. Avoid lifting the mattress to tuck sheets in.
- Only do the areas you can safely reach.
- Clean mattresses and pillows regularly.
- Report damaged and/or faulty beds, equipment, mattresses, pillows and linen to appropriate person.
- Do not climb onto a bed or place both knees on a bed.
- If the bed is against the wall and cannot be moved, access the far side by placing one knee only on the bed at a time, leaving the other foot on the ground. Drop the sheet between the wall and mattress, rather than attempting to tuck it in.

# Manual Client Transfer

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## Safe Work Practices:

- Don't forget to 'PACE' yourself!
- **Do not lift a load weighing more than 35 lbs. without assistance.**
- You should be informed of the client's abilities, transfer needs, physical stability, and tendency, if any, towards aggressive acts through proper documentation and communication. Report any changes in client's mobility or behaviour to your supervisor and write a progress note. Always read the client's care plan.
- Anticipate what actions would be necessary if the client loses balance or falls.
- Assess the client, even briefly, before every transfer.
- Clearly communicate the procedure for the transfer and ensure understanding by any other staff assisting and the client/resident.
- Assure that the path of the transfer or lift is clear from obstructions and that furniture and aids that the client is being transferred to are properly placed and secure.
- Always remember to use good body mechanics when lifting.

# Meal Preparation

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## Safe Work Practices:

- All meals prepared should be signed and dated by the worker who prepared them. This includes any items taken from the freezer, such as meat.
- Record the date and type of meal prepared on a daily activity sheet to ensure variety in meal preparation and to monitor intake.
- Deep frying foods on the stove, the use of chip pots and deep fryers of any kind should never be done.
- Wear gloves, apron to protect against hot spills.
- Wash hands and surfaces often using hot, soapy water. Wash your hands before and after you handle food or utensils, especially raw meat, poultry, fish, or eggs.
- Separate raw, cooked, and ready-to-eat foods. Keep raw meat, poultry, fish, or eggs away from other foods to prevent cross-contamination. If possible, use separate cutting boards for these foods. If not, be sure to wash cutting boards carefully with soap between uses.
- Cooking food properly is the best way to make sure it is safe to eat. Bacteria like E. coli, Salmonella and Listeria are killed by heat.
- Wash all fruits and vegetables before serving.
- Before cooking fruit or vegetables, cut away any bruised or damaged areas, since harmful bacteria can thrive in these areas.
- Wear gloves when collecting dishes and cutlery when clients have eaten. Place liquids into collection bins and other debris into garbage containers.
- When placing food / beverages in front of clients, caution them if food / dishes are hot.
- When filling plates or bowls with food, try to reduce repetitive movements by changing scooping hands periodically.
- Do not place more than two plates on a tray when serving tables.
- Do not over stack dishes on clearing carts.
- Bring cart to dishwashing area and empty trash into waste cans.

# Mechanical Client Transfer

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## Safe Work Practices:

- Don't forget to 'PACE' yourself!
- Always have two staff must be present for a mechanical lift transfer.
- Assess the load. **Do not lift a load weighing more than 35 lbs. without assistance.**
- Do not use the lift to transport client from room to room. Use for short distance transfers only.
- Only use slings made specifically for the lift.
- Ensure there are no obstacles in the anticipated path of lift.
- Adjust the legs of the mechanical lift to maximum width for stability.
- Store the lift away safely with brakes on when not being used.
- Do not leave the client alone while the sling is attached to the mechanical lift.
- Remove all slings from behind client after use unless indicated in care plan.
- Report any changes in the client's ability to transfer or mobilize to your Supervisor. Document changes in transfer method in the client's progress notes.
- Do not use lifts if the client's mobility status changes.



# Mopping and Sweeping

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## Safe Work Practices:

- Keep elbows close to the body and use a mop or broom that allows you to stand up straight.
- Take steps with your feet to move with the mop or broom so it stays close to you. Do not swing the mop or broom by using your arms and twisting your back as this increases pressure on your back, shoulders, and wrists.
- Alternate right and left hands at the top of the mop or broom handle.
- When mopping under a low surface, bend your hips and knees or go onto one knee and push the mop forward and back.
- Keep your back upright when wringing out the mop by bending your legs instead of at the waist.
- When sweeping under furniture, bend with your legs rather than your back.
- When sweeping up debris, get close by going onto one knee.

# Oxygen Safety

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## Safe Work Practices:

- Ensure “Oxygen in Use” and “No Smoking” signs are posted on the client’s front door and in the room where oxygen is being used.
- A designated area needs to display the following information:
  - The name and contact number of the oxygen supply company.
  - The prescribed oxygen flow rate.
  - The client’s emergency contact information.
- When providing respite services, always ask the main caregiver to check the equipment to ensure everything is working correctly BEFORE the caregiver leaves the home.
- Do not allow smoking. All smoking materials should be removed from the room.
- Note the location of the fire extinguisher.
- Do not use equipment with frayed cords or electrical shorts.
- Avoid nylon or woolen clothing because it is more likely to cause static electricity.
- Avoid using lotions, creams or other home care products containing petroleum.
- Oxygen cylinders should not be placed or stored in direct sunlight, near radiators or other heat sources.
- Oxygen cylinders should be secured in place and in the upright position in a well ventilated area.
- Do not use flammable products around oxygen.
- Do not adjust the oxygen flow rate unless you supervisor specifically instructs you to do so.
- Do not use extension cords with an oxygen concentrator.
- Check for a smoke detector particularly in the room where oxygen is used.
- Turn the oxygen supply valve to the “Off” position when oxygen is not in use.
- Never use aerosol spray containing combustible materials near the oxygen source.

# PACE

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## Safe Work Practices:

Conduct a mobility status check prior to any resident handling or mobility attempt using the pre-mobility check tool (PACE).

**P – Physical**

**A – Agitation/Aggression**

**C - Communication**

**E - Environment**

\* (Follow steps in the order of ECAP)

## **E - Environmental Status Check:**

Ask the following questions:

- Is the environment, including the floor, clear of obstacles?
- Is there enough space to access the person and use any necessary equipment?
- Is all necessary equipment present?
- Is the mattress surface safe for the person to perform assessment activities?

Assessment Results: No obstacles; Movable obstacles; Obstacles

## **C – Communication:**

Pay attention to the person's ability to:

- Answer simple questions (e.g., how are you doing today?)
- Follow your instructions (e.g. can you bend your knees for me?)

Assessment Results: Sufficient communication; Can follow commands; Limitations; Cannot communicate

## **A - Agitation/Aggression:**

Does the person have:

- Clipped or angry speech?
- History of agitated/aggressive behaviour?

Is the person:

- Using angry facial expressions?
- Refusing to communicate?
- Using threats or threatening gestures?

Assessment Results: Non-aggressive; Unpredictable: Moderate

## **P – Physical Status:**

**Perform the following mini assessment:**

- |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| 1. Bed mobility          | Roll onto side in bed  |
| 2. Transfer into Sitting | Sit up on edge of bed from side lying position                 |
| 3. Sitting Balance       | Sitting on the edge of the bed upright with hands in their lap |
| 4. Sit to Stand          | Weight bearing ability while seated                            |
| 5. Stand/Walk/Transfer   | Stand-up and initiate a step                                   |
| 6. Walk/Transfer         | Stability and weight bearing ability while standing            |

Assessment Results: Independent; Minimal assistance; Moderate-maximum assistance

# Propane Leak

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Propane is colourless and odourless. An additive (ethyl mercaptan) is added which makes it smell like rotten eggs or boiling cabbage.

## **Safe Work Practices:**

**If you smell gas in the house or the alarm signals, immediately do the following:**

- ACT FAST! Exit the home immediately. Assist the client outside and away from the house, if it is safe for you to do.
- Leave the door and windows open.
- If a competent person is present, he/she should shut off the gas supply at the outside tank.
- Call 911 from outside the home.
- Stay with your client, away from the house until the problem has been corrected.
- Notify your supervisor and document as soon as safely possible.

## **REMEMBER**

- Do not turn light switches, appliances, flashlights or thermostats on or off.
- Do not use the telephone or cell phone. A spark from one of these could ignite the gas.
- Extinguish all smoking materials and open flame.
- Do not light matches or other sources of ignition.
- Do not re-enter the building until the problem has been corrected.

**Be aware of the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning. They may include:**

- Dull headache
- Weakness
- Dizziness
- Nausea or vomiting
- Shortness of breath
- Confusion
- Blurred vision
- Loss of consciousness

# Refueling Vehicles

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## Safe Work Practices:

- Properly position your vehicle with the gas tank and ALWAYS turn off your engine. Do not smoke, light matches or lighters while refueling or parked at the service island.
- Do not use cell phones and other electronic equipment while refueling.
- Pump fuel according to the procedure outlined on that particular gas station's pump.
- If a fire starts while refueling, back away from the vehicle. Do NOT remove the nozzle from your gas tank. Shut off pump by pressing the emergency shut off button and alert the station attendant.
- Wash your hands and any areas of your skin that have been in contact with fuel, with warm water and soap.
- Do not over-fill or top-off your vehicle tank.
- Do not boost a vehicle battery while parked at the pump island

# Robbery and Mugging

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## **There are two key rules to remember:**

1. Whatever the tangible object being sought by the robber, it is not worth the risk of injury or death. Let it go.
2. Whoever has the weapon makes all the rules.

## **Safe Work Practices:**

- Try to remain calm and in control, make any excuse to get away.
- Obey the robber's orders.
- Do not volunteer any information.
- Be alert for non-verbal signs of violence (i.e., change in face color, staring with no eye contact).

## **If you are detained by someone:**

- Remain calm.
- Tell the person that you are expected back at the office/home.
- Lie if necessary.
- Scream!! This may startle the person, as well as attract the attention of others.
- Do not under any circumstances, fight the robber or attempt to use weapons.
- Keep your hands in sight.
- Don't make any sudden movements.
- Mentally, note details of the robber's physical characteristics. Do not stare.
- Note description of any weapons.
- Let the robber leave.
- Note the robber's direction and means of travel when leaving, only if it is safe to do so (i.e., vehicle and license plate number).

## **After A Robbery:**

- Do not chase or follow the robber.
- Go to a safe area and immediately call 911. Follow their instructions.
- Notify your supervisor of the incident as soon as safely possible.

# Sharps Disposal

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## Safe Work Practices:

- Wear nitrile gloves while disposing of sharp objects that are contaminated with bodily fluids.
- Use tongs, tweezers or hand clamps to pick up and dispose of sharp objects.
- If there is a risk of splashing, wear protective eyewear.
- Do not recap or re-sheath needles.
- Wash your hands before and after disposing contaminated sharps.
- Dispose of sharp objects point first in approved bio hazardous sharps containers immediately after use.
- All disposal containers should be stored in such a way as to prevent access by unauthorized persons.
- Seal and discard sharps containers when they are three-quarters full.

## If your skin is punctured by a sharp:

- o Let it bleed, wash the affected area immediately with soap and water. Alcohol-based hand sanitizer can be used to clean the area if soap and water are not available. Do not squeeze the affected area.
- o Report the incident immediately to your supervisor and first aid attendant. Complete an incident report form, including the date and time of the exposure, how it happened, and name of the source individual (if known).



# Step Stools/Step Ladders

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## Safe Work Practices:

- Carefully inspect the ladder or step stool for integrity, excessive wear or damage before use.
- Make sure all of the feet of the ladder or step stool are level. Do not use the equipment if it wobbles.
- Check with your ladder manufacturer for the weight capacity ratings for your ladder.
- Go up and down a ladder facing it, taking only one step at a time. Hold the side rails with both hands.
- Wear proper shoes. Do not wear open toe shoes or high heels. Slip-resistant shoes are best.
- Do not stand or sit on top of the step ladder / stool.
- Maintain 3-points of contact when ascending or descending a step ladder.
- Do not leave step ladders / stools unattended.
- Carry objects so as not to impair ability to climb/descend, maintain balance, and preserve field of view.
- Keep hands above knee level when reaching downward to grasp objects.
- Keep belt buckle (i.e., navel) within centre of stool when reaching sideways. Do not over reach.
- Avoid leaning backward while moving object (i.e., size of object should not interfere with its movement across the stool).
- Keep both feet on the stool. Avoid rising up on toes when reaching up above to place object.
- Avoid applying forceful or jerky pushing/pulling movements where there is the potential for an unexpected reaction.

# Summer Heat Safety

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## Safe Work Practices:

- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Wear loose fitting clothes in lighter colors.
- Eat light meals.
- Wear sunscreen.
- Cool and re-hydrate your body during travel times.
- Pace yourself.
- Schedule activities carefully.
- Prevent home air temperature increases when possible.

# Sweeping Stairs

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## Safe Work Practices:

- Clear the staircase of any toys, clothing or objects on which you could slip.
- Begin sweeping at the top of the staircase. Find a comfortable position in which to sweep. Use a kitchen broom if you're looking downward from the top landing, or use a small brush if you're facing the top step from a couple of steps below.
- Work the broom's bristles into the sides of the treads where they meet the wall and/or balusters. Use short, firm strokes to direct the dust and dirt into a small pile at the center of the step.
- Sweep the pile gently into the dustpan. Avoid breathing in any of the dust.
- Move down the staircase, paying attention to where you step so as to maintain your balance. Continue to work the broom bristles from the sides of each step into a center pile.
- If you're sweeping while facing downward, use a dustpan with a long, upright handle to make collecting the dust easier.
- If your outside staircase is enclosed on both ends, focus on the sides of the steps, and sweep the dirt toward the middle before sweeping it down to the steps below. If the staircase is open on one or both ends, start from one side and move the dirt across the step and off the open edge onto the ground below.
- Walk slowly with the dustpan to a garbage can. Tip the dustpan slowly into the receptacle so dust doesn't fly out.
- Wear a face mask if you're allergic to dust.

# Threats and Physical Confrontation

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If you feel unsafe, verbally threatened, or expect the situation to escalate to physical / sexual violence, take immediate steps to ensure your own safety.

## **Safe Work Practices:**

- Immediately leave the home or unsafe area.
- Call 911, if necessary. Go to the nearest emergency facility for medical assistance, as needed.
- Report the incident to your supervisor by telephone or in person as soon as possible.

## **If you are physically/ sexually attacked:**

- Yell or scream as loud as possible. Try shouting the words like STOP, FIRE OR HELP.
- If you are being pulled along or dragged, fall to the ground and roll.
- Always look for a way to escape.
- If the attacker has a weapon, use your common sense. Fighting against it could be dangerous.
- Run to the nearest safe place, i.e. an office, or open store.
- Dial 911 immediately after the incident.

# Transfer Belt

---

## Safe Work Practices:

- Prepare client by verbally explaining the transfer plan.
- Ensure belt is the correct size (Size will be determined by therapist).
- Don't apply the transfer belt over the head. Apply the belt securely around the client's waist (or narrowed part of trunk) by introducing belt from side.
- Do not thread your hand or arm through the handles of the transfer belt. Hold the handles securely with a fist grip, thumbs up.
- Grasp the handles of transfer belt at the mid-back of the client. Do not reach around client too far.
- Make sure equipment and area is prepared for ease of transfer.
- Position self to weight shift in the direction of the transfer.
- Use the transfer belt to guide and stabilize the client. Do not attempt to lift the client with the transfer belt.
- Always remove belt after transfer or walk.
- Encourage client to assist as able.
- Do not allow client to pull up on you.

# Transferring and Repositioning Clients/Residents

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## **Safe Work Practices:**

- Use transfer assist devices such as transfer belts or low-friction slide sheets.
- Remove obstacles from around beds and chairs so that you can position yourself close to the client/resident.
- Never let your client/resident hold onto you.
- When possible, work in pairs or teams to lighten the load.
- Use proper techniques: Shift your body weight using your legs during the transfer or reposition task. Don't pull with your arms or back

## **Ensure a strong base of support:**

- Keep your feet shoulder-width apart.
- Position one foot forward and one foot back.
- Bend your knees.
- Keep your back straight. Never try to hold a client in a standing position.
- Never try to stop a client from falling. Control the client's fall to the floor as trained.
- Use a strong power grip.
- Avoid pinch grips.

# Travelling by Public Transit

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## Safe Work Practices:

- Plan your route ahead of time.
- Plan your arrival time at the transit stop just before the transit is due to arrive.
- Avoid isolated or poorly lit transit stops.
- Carry an up-to-date schedule, in case you are delayed or miss your transit.
- Stand with a group rather than alone, if possible.
- Carry a personal safety alarm.
- Have your pass/fare ready. Do not open your wallet or purse.
- Sit near the driver if you are alone or it is late at night. Alert the driver if you feel unsafe.
- Keep valuables out of sight.
- Be aware of your surroundings.
- Avoid direct eye contact with other travelers and do not participate in lengthy conversations with people in the street.
- Check to see if you are being followed. If so, try to get back on the bus, or quickly walk to the closest store, business or lighted house and dial 911.

# Using Hoists

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## Safe Work Practices:

### All hoisting tasks -

- Read the client care plan and ensure it is current and relevant.
- Review the person's condition prior to each transfer to ensure continued suitability for hoisting and the use of the equipment.
- Ensure the person's weight does not exceed the safe weight limit of both the hoist and sling.
- Do not use the hoist/sling unless you have had the necessary training.
- Check the correct hoist and sling specified in the care plan are available and servicing and thorough examination are in date.
- Ensure the equipment works and is free from observable defects before starting.
- Hoists and slings must not be adapted or misused.
- Before each use, check the hoist and sling in accordance with the equipment manufacturer's guidance on inspections and pre-use checks.
- Familiarise yourself with the hoist's emergency lowering systems.
- Check there is a sufficient number of handlers to carry out the task safely in accordance with the client care plan.
- Ensure the environment is free from obstacles and the floor free of slip and trip risks.
- Ensure the support surface is ready and safe to receive the person.
- Contact your supervisor immediately, if there are any concerns about the equipment, task, person, environment etc.
- Always communicate with everyone involved in the task at all times.
- Prior to raising, always check if the sling is positioned correctly and double check the sling attachments.
- Follow manufacturer's instructions and policies and procedures with regard to care and cleaning of the hoist.
- Never leave the client unattended in a hoist.



# Using Vacuums (Wet and Dry)

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## **Vacuum cleaners should:**

- Be fit for the purpose (appropriate for floor surface).
- Be regularly maintained and in good working order.
- Be easy to move (lightweight, functional castors).
- Have an adjustable wand length to enable worker to carry out task in an upright position.
- Have a suitable variety of fittings.
- Have good suction with an adjustable vent.
- Be easily accessible and stored at a safe height.
- Be easy to empty.

## **Safe Work Practices:**

- Before using, inspect the vacuum for any defects such as damaged cord or switches.
- Ensure the vacuum is turned off before plugging it in.
- Use only attachments supplied or approved by the manufacturer.
- Assess if help is needed to move furniture or other heavy or large items.
- When using a vacuum, take steps with the vacuum wand rather than repetitively bending and reaching with the vacuum handle. Go on one knee or squat to vacuum areas under barriers.
- Empty bags or canisters frequently to reduce weight and power of machine.
- Avoid vacuuming stairs that require the repeated lifting of the vacuum cleaner – or use suitable lightweight stick vacuum cleaner.
- Ensure tasks involving repetitive movements are not performed for more than 30 minutes at a time. Rotate to other tasks that require the use of different body movements.

## **If using a wet vac:**

- Put out caution signs or barrier off for wet floors.
- Whenever possible, try to drain a wet vac into a floor drain to avoid lifting the tank. If draining a wet vac into a sink is required, maintain an upright straight back position:
  - Lower your body by bending your hips and knees.
  - Get a good grip with both hands.
  - Lift by pushing through your legs.
  - Rest the edge of the tank against the sink to share the weight of the tank.
  - Always take small steps to turn rather than twisting your spine.
- If there is a risk of chemicals or other contaminants in the fluid, wear gloves when emptying tanks or adding any cleaning chemicals. Refer to manufacturer or workplace label for proper PPE if using chemicals.
- Rinse tanks with water to remove any debris.

# Walking to Work

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## Safe Work Practices:

- Plan your route in advance, using well-lit, populated areas whenever possible.
- Don't take short cuts.
- Dress for the weather. Wear at least one piece of reflective clothing if walking at night.
- Carry a personal flash light, a whistle or safety alarm.
- Do not carry any type of weapon, including pepper spray. Weapons can potentially be used against you and are illegal in certain areas.
- Hold you head up and walk with purpose and confidence. Watch where you are going and be alert for obstacles.
- Walk around groups of people rather than through them.
- Call 911 if you feel threatened.

# Winter Driving

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## Safe Work Practices:

- Before heading out, check the latest road conditions.
- Have your vehicle inspected by a qualified mechanic prior to the winter season.
- Install winter tires. Consider studs on tires if you are required to use dirt roads.
- Always keep a windshield scraper, broom and shovel for ice and snow removal.
- Maintain at least a half tank of gas during the winter season.
- Allow yourself extra time and use public transportation, if available.
- Clear snow and ice from all windows, lights, mirrors, and the roof.
- Dress appropriately for the weather conditions or keep extra clothes in your car in case of break down.
- Always wear your seatbelt.
- Carry a winter car kit.
- Drive carefully. Stay alert, slow down and stay in control.
- If you start to skid, don't panic, brake or accelerate. Look and steer smoothly in the direction you want to go. Review how to maintain control of your vehicle when you slide.
- Follow vehicles at a safe distance.
- Don't park on the roadside as it is a hazard for other vehicles, snow ploughs and for yourself when getting in and out of your vehicle.

## If trapped in your vehicle during a storm:

- Stay in the car. Do not leave to search for assistance unless help is visible within 100 meters.
- Display your trouble sign.
- Occasionally run engine to keep warm. Turn on the car's engine for about ten minutes each hour.
- Be aware of carbon monoxide poisoning. Keep the exhaust pipe clear of snow, and open a window for ventilation.
- Stay awake, move and do minor exercises for blood circulation.
- Avoid overexertion when shoveling or pushing the car.
- Drink water to prevent dehydration and ration food.
- Use cell phone only to advise help where you are or if you are in immediate trouble to preserve battery.

# Winter Walking

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## **Make sure you are prepared and your walking surfaces are safe:**

- Plan ahead to make sure you have enough time to get where you are going.
- Keep entranceways and sidewalks clear of ice and snow. Report hazards on sidewalks or pathways to your supervisor.
- Walk on cleared walkways—avoid shortcuts that have not been cleared.
- Assume that all wet, dark areas on the pavement may be slippery or icy. If you can, walk around them.
- Carry a small bag of grit, sand or non-clumping cat litter in your jacket pocket or handbag, to sprinkle when you are confronted with icy sidewalks, steps, bus stops, etc.
- Use handrails on stairs and ramps. If you must walk on a slope where there are no handrails, take extra caution.
- Avoid carrying heavy things or large objects that block your view. They can also make you lose your balance.
- Do not text and walk at the same time.
- Ask a passer-by to help you cross an icy surface, if available.

## **Outfit yourself for safe winter walking:**

- Choose a good pair of winter boots that are well-insulated, waterproof, have a thick non-slip tread sole made of natural rubber, wide low heels, and are light-weight.
- Ice cleats/grippers on footwear can help you walk on hard packed snow and ice. However, they become dangerously slippery when walking on smooth surfaces such as stone, tile and ceramic and must be removed. Be sure that you are able to attach and remove them from your boots, preferably while sitting down. Ice cleats are not intended to be used on high heel footwear.
- Use a walking stick, ski pole or a cane to help with balance. Make sure they're the right height for you. When your cane is held upside down, the end should be at wrist level. If using a cane, attach a retractable ice pick to the end.
- Help other road users see you by wearing bright colors or adding reflective material to clothing.
- Prevent heat loss by wearing a warm hat, scarf, and mittens or gloves. Dressing in layers may also keep you warmer.

**Body movements can increase your stability on an icy surface (walk like a penguin!):**

- Slow down and think about your next move. Keeping your body as loose as possible, spread your feet to more than a foot apart to provide a base of support. This will help stabilize you as you walk.
- Keep your knees loose - let them bend a bit. This will keep your centre of gravity lower to the ground, which further stabilizes the body.
- Keep your head up and don't lean forward.
- Keep your hands out of your pockets to help keep your balance.
- Now you are ready to take a step. Make the step small, placing your whole foot down at once. Then shift your weight very slowly to this foot and bring your other foot to meet it the same way. Keep a wide base of support.
- Some people prefer to drag their feet or shuffle them. If this feels better to you, then do so. Just remember to place your whole foot on the ice at once and keep your base of support approximately one foot wide.

**Falls may happen - When falling, the objective is to have as many square inches of your body make contact with the surface as possible, thus, spreading out the impact of the fall.**

- Tuck your chin in, turn your head, and throw an arm up. It is better to land on your arm than on your head.
- While falling, twist or roll your body to the side.
- It is better to land on your buttocks and side than on your back.
- Keep your wrists, elbows and knees bent.
- Do not try to break a fall with your hands or elbows.

**All slips, trips and falls, with or without injury, should be reported to your supervisor, so corrective action can be taken to prevent similar incidents from occurring.**

# Working Alone on Home Visits

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## Safe Work Practices:

- Carry a flash light and whistle, if possible.
- Ensure your cell phone battery is charged.
- Keep your car in good working order. Maintain at least ½ tank of fuel.
- Avoid wearing articles of clothing or jewellery which can be grabbed easily.
- Leave valuables at home and carry as little as possible.
- Back your car up to the house, close windows and lock doors. Prevent being blocked.
- Park in a well-lit area and make mental notes of your surroundings.
- Don't get out of the car if you feel threatened or unsafe.
- Avoid elevators with suspicious people and get off if you feel uncomfortable.
- If attacked on an elevator, push the alarm and as many floor buttons as possible. Keep your back to the sidewall.
- Follow client into the home and do not take the lead.
- Scan for exit locations
- Be aware for signs behaviour change of others in the home.
- Avoid giving personal information.
- If there is potential for violence, leave the area and avoid entering unsafe room such as the kitchen.
- Mentally rehearse aggressive situation and response strategies.
- Leave a home if there is an unsecured firearm.
- Ask for unrestrained pets to be restrained. If this request is denied, end the visit.
- Scan the outside area from a window before leaving.
- Carry your keys in your hand.
- When walking to vehicle, proceed quickly and directly.
- If someone confronts you, stay calm and obey commands. Give requested items. Call 911 if required.
- Once inside your vehicle, immediately lock the doors.

# Working Environments with Pets

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## **Safe Work Practices:**

- Before going to a client's home for the first time, check the care plan for presence of pets.
- If you are concerned about whether a pet will be restrained, call ahead and arrange for the animal to be confined.
- If there is an unsecured pet, ask the client to secure the pet away from the area. If the client is unwilling to do so, immediately leave the home and contact your Supervisor.
- Scan the area, looking for signs that an animal may be around.
- If area is gated, close the gate, but do not latch it until it is known whether or not an animal is present.
- When knocking on the door, stand well back and allow the owner to restrain the pet.
- Do not pat, bend over or suddenly approach any pet.

## **When leaving property because of unrestrained pet:**

- Walk in a confident manner as dogs are very good at reading body language.
- Do not disturb a sleeping pet.
- Avoid excessive eye contact with pet.
- Do not go into yards or homes where if you are at risk of an attack or see an unrestrained pet.
- Most attacks occur when leaving the property. Back away and put something between you and the pet.
- Never run unless you are confident that you can beat the animal to a safe haven.

