Patient handling an injury risk for healthcare workers

Each year, over 35,000 back and other injuries result in nursing employees missing work, according to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Nursing assistants and hospital orderlies, in fact, experience about three times the rate of musculoskeletal injuries as construction workers. The number one cause of these injuries is moving and lifting patients. (Sources: OSHA, NPR)

Rising obesity rates, an aging workforce and staffing shortages all exacerbate the problem of patient handling injuries. (Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) Often devastating to individual employees, these incidents can be very costly to hospitals as well. According to one survey, such injuries accounted for 25 percent of all healthcare industry workers' compensation claims in 2011. (Source: Aon Risk Solutions) Additionally, patient handling injuries can have an adverse effect on employee turnover, productivity, and morale as well as patient safety, satisfaction, and recovery time. (Source: OSHA)

Safe patient handling, including investment in patient lifts and eliminating manual handling when possible, can help healthcare institutions protect employees and minimize long-term costs. (Source: OSHA)

ACTION STEPS

Consider adopting a "minimal lift policy" at your facility, a system that, in most circumstances, replaces manual lifting, transferring
and repositioning of patients with mechanical and other devices. (Source: OSHA)

Train all caregivers on the proper use of equipment, or consider hiring "lift teams," units dedicated to operating lifting equipment. (Source: OSHA)

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**TUESDAY 10**

*No Mass Gatherings Scheduled*

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