

Manitoba Health, Seniors and Active Living (MHSAL) supports reporting and learning from patient safety events. The focus of a patient safety review is to closely look at the health care system that surrounds and interacts with those giving and receiving care. The goal is to identify risks to patient safety and recommend the most effective ways to minimize risk and improve the delivery of healthcare.

Patient Safety Learning Advisory

Fall from Mechanical Floor Lift

Summary:

A client fell during transfer using a mechanical floor lift resulting in a compression fracture of the lumbar spine.

Keywords:

Floor lift, mechanical lift, loop migration, portable lift

Findings of the Review:

A transfer sling was positioned under the client and the bed was elevated to enable the mechanical lift 'feet' to roll under the bed. When the mechanical lift was used to raise the client off the bed, one of the sling loops disconnected from the lift. The client fell to the floor, sustaining a compression fracture of the lumbar spine.

The design of the sling loops and carry hooks on the portable mechanical lift allow for the sling loops to migrate off the carry hooks. Sling loops can migrate for a variety of reasons, including shifting of the client's weight and bulky straps in a small carry hook space.

System Learning:

Provide education to all staff regarding proper procedures when using a mechanical lift.

As able, relocate clients requiring the use of a mechanical lift to rooms equipped with a ceiling track lift. Ceiling track lifts have deeper carry hooks than floor lifts, which reduces the risk of loop migration.

Determine if the carry hooks on the current floor lift model can be modified to reduce the risk of loop migration.

Standardize the purchase of future mechanical floor lifts to those designed with carry hooks that will reduce the risk of sling loop migration.

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