

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

Sling Loop Migration Causing Fall From Ceiling Track Lift

Summary:

Resident fell during transfer when the leg strap of the sling migrated (disconnected) from the carry hook of the ceiling track lift. Staff attempted to catch the resident, but were only able to catch the legs, which resulted in the back of the resident's head hitting the floor first. The resident sustained a laceration that required suturing.

Keywords: sling loop, transfer, migration, fall, lift, ceiling track

This review is based on a single event.

Findings of the Review:

Inconsistencies in the sequence of attaching the sling to the carry hook increased the risk of loop migration.

Current ceiling track lift training videos utilize a different lift than the one being used during this fall. The carry hooks differ in look and size.

The design of the carry hook is shallow and the sling loop may dislodge from the folding arm for reasons such as: shift in the resident's weight, bulky or twisted straps. The design of the folding arms retainer clip allows for the sling loop to rest on top of the clip, giving the appearance of proper placement.

A newer version of the folding arm is available for this ceiling track lift, which has a deeper carry hook with a retainer clip. The carry hook of the ceiling track lift involved in this fall is no longer available and the company that provides preventative maintenance recommends retrofitting each ceiling track lift with the newer version of folding arm.

Both versions of folding arms were field tested by the region for loop migration and failed. Using a mechanical lift for transferring residents is complex and there are multiple steps to ensure safety.

System Learning:

Develop a quick reference guide for safe lift operation, detailing roles and responsibilities for staff to utilize as checklists immediately prior to a mechanical lift transfer.

Create a poster as a visual cue of acceptable strap placement/attachment and place on the carts that house the ceiling track lift carry hooks.

Develop and implement a plan to convert the existing folding arms to the newer version.

Develop site-specific orientation utilizing the mechanical ceiling track lift involved in this fall.

Review sling loop migration risk with all applicable staff.

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