



Bathroom Hazards

Click on the area for specific information



Common safety and health topics

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ergonomics• Blood Borne Pathogens• Handling Sharps• Soiled Items | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hot Water Heater• Hazardous Chemicals• Adequate Lighting• Cabinets |
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This tool is used to help develop a comprehensive health and safety program. Within this tool are links that will lead to resources which will require internet connectivity for you to view them. The Care West Team has captured key elements in which we believe are pertinent to developing a successful health and safety program.

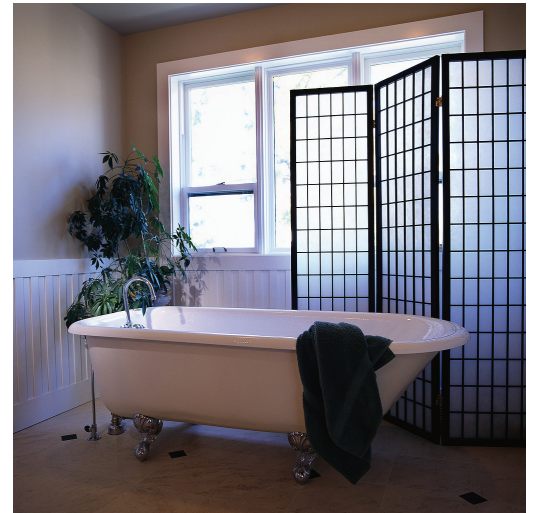
Ergonomics

*Acute and chronic back Injury is caused by:

-Lifting, reaching, or moving residents who cannot move on their own.

-Awkward postures, such as pulling lifting patients from the tubs and shower also contribute to back injuries!!

- Would strongly recommend shower chairs to be used (if available). Residents are bathed in shower in a shower chair with wheels, so lifting in and out of tub is eliminated.
- Try to avoid awkward postures: Pulling, lifting patients from tubs and showers.
- Instead of bending over to bathe patients, try sitting down on a stool. Limiting your reaching.
- Always use the proper equipment to reduce risk of back injuries when lifting, showering, or moving residents.
- Should have safety rails in showers and tubs
- Recommend installing handrails in bathrooms.
- Attend training, as required (initial and review), for lift and transfer procedures and apply the knowledge acquired when working with clients.

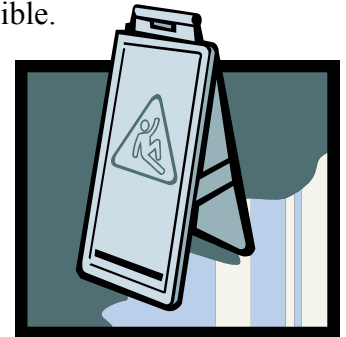


** Strongly recommend that employers provide training in proper lifting techniques - avoiding awkward postures.

Slips/Falls

* Water spills that can lead to falls and injuries should be cleaned as soon as possible. Continually wet surfaces can also create a health hazard by promoting the growth of molds and bacteria that can cause infections or allergic reactions in employees.

- Use non slip floor mats and other dry standing places should be provided where practicable.
- Make sure that rails, shower chairs, handheld showers, etc. are used!
- Use safe handling techniques
- Floors shall be kept clean and dry
- Use no skid waxes and surfaces coated with grit or waterproof footwear (non slip shoes) may also help decrease slip / fall hazards.
- OSHA walking / working surfaces standard requires that all places of employment shall be kept clean and orderly and in a sanitary condition.



Hazardous Chemicals

- Recommend that you have a copy of the MSDS binder at (point of exposure).
- All chemicals should be labeled to reflect the chemical they hold inside.
- Chemicals need to be stored and locked away when not being used.
- Be familiar with the chemicals you use on a daily basis. (Know and understand the MSDS).
- Wear latex gloves when cleaning and using chemicals.



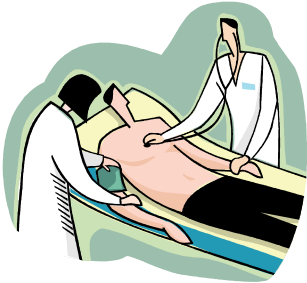
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Blood borne Pathogens

* Blood borne transmission means that a disease is spread when the blood of an infected person reaches the bloodstream of another person. Standard Precautions apply to **ALL** your patients, no matter what their diagnosis – even if they don't seem sick!

- You should use Standard Precautions with every patient **and** when you have contact with:

- Blood
- All other body fluids, except sweat – even if you don't see blood
- Broken skin
- Mucous membranes (like the inside of the eyelids, nose or mouth).
- Dried blood and body fluids.



• **What are Standard Precautions – They are basic infection control guidelines for you to follow as you perform your daily work. These guidelines for preventing the spread of blood borne diseases include:**

- Washing your hands properly
- Using protective barriers like gloves, gowns and masks (remember that wearing gloves **does not** take the place of hand washing)
- Handling infectious waste material properly
- Washing your hands between clients
- Wearing gloves whenever you touch blood, body fluids or contaminated items.
- Putting on clean gloves before you touch a clients broken skin or mucous membranes
- Changing gloves between tasks and between clients. Helping to keep your work environments as clean as possible by cleaning up spills and patient care areas promptly.



Safe Handling and Disposal of Sharps and Medical Supplies in Home Health Settings

- If you provide Health Care services for someone, you may have to dispose of sharp objects, soiled dressings or supplies that may be contaminated with infectious waste.

What are Sharps?

1. Needles
2. Syringes with needles attached
3. Lancets
4. Razor Blades
5. Other Items that could cause a puncture, cut or abrasion

How Should I handle Sharps?

- Most Injuries related to sharps occur when replacing the cap on a used needle. For this reason, used needles should not be recapped; instead, they should be discarded immediately into an appropriate sharps disposal container. It is not safe to carry an uncapped, used needle. Used needles should also be left attached to syringes to avoid injury. Other used sharps must also be handled with a great deal of care to prevent cuts.

What Features are required of a Sharps Disposal Container?

(A Sharps disposal container must):

1. Be made of puncture resistant material and not glass or thin plastic.
2. Be leak – proof.
3. Be designated to easily allow sharps to be placed in the container, but difficult to remove the contents, or have a lid that will seal the container when it is full.
4. Be clearly labeled “hazardous materials”.
5. Be large enough to hold the amount of sharps you use.
6. Be disposed of in a suitable manner.

Daily Sharps Safety Check – On a daily basis, you should ensure that the sharps disposal container is:

1. Not punctured
2. Not filled above the “full” line
3. Not leaking
4. Not stored near food supplies
5. Not stored where children can reach it

What do I do with a Full Sharps Container?

** Some drug stores or pharmacies will provide suitable sharps containers and will take your full sharps containers and dispose of them for you. Alternatively, you can call your hospital, health unit or municipal waste authority to ask about where you can deliver the container for safe disposal. These numbers are located in your local telephone directory.

- If you work for an agency that regularly provides health care in people’s homes, your employer may have made other arrangements with licensed waste handlers to dispose of used sharps safely.

What Should I Do if I am Injured by a Used Needle?

- Workers are required to report all injuries occurring on the job to their supervisor. If you accidentally puncture or cut yourself with a used sharp, you should treat the wound using first aid measures and then seek medical attention. Depending on the source of the sharp, and your immune status, you may be offered prophylactic medications.

What are Soiled Dressings and Supplies?

(Soiled dressing and supplies include):

- Gauze and wipes used to cleanse wounds
 - Used bandages and tapes
 - Disposable sheets and drapes
 - Used incontinence pads
 - Used sanitary napkins
 - Used diapers
 - Other similar items
- Soiled dressings and other medical supplies may contain infectious waste. These items should be handled carefully, using vinyl or latex gloves. Try to keep the materials away from your clothing. Always wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water after removing gloves and immediately after exposure to infectious waste.

What Do I Do with these Soiled Items?

- Place used disposable Materials in plastic bags.
- Make sure the bags are securely closed (e.g., with a hard twist tie).
- Put the garbage bag of for regular garbage pickup.

Hot Water Heater (Domestic hot – water systems)

- Store hot water at 140 degrees F. To avoid scalding problems install appropriate, fail – safe scald protection equipment, such as preset thermostatic mixing valves.
- Where building cannot be retrofitted, periodically increasing the temperature to at least 158 degrees F or chlorination followed by flushing should be considered.
- Systems should be inspected annually to ensure equipment is functioning properly.

Adequate Lighting

- Need adequate lighting to be able to see any potential hazards
- Use bright, vivid colors to light up rooms
- Lighted switch plates make finding switches at night easier
- Have night lights in between bedrooms and bathrooms
- Provide adequate lighting especially during night hours. You can use flashlights or low-level lighting when entering patient rooms or any other places around the house!
- Always have a flashlight handy for emergency purposes.



Cabinets

- Store heavier items on bottom shelves and lighter items higher up.
- Never overfill cabinets, preventing items from falling out when you open cabinets!