

Safety Tips for the Home Care & Hospice Industry

Employees providing home health care/hospice services are frequently at risk of becoming ill or injured by the very nature of their job. Due to the unique and often complex hazards associated with this occupation, proactive safety measures are vital to ensuring the protection of staff as well as the overall operation. Identified below are some of the most common causes of workplace injury in this industry and tips to help maximize prevention.

Patient Handling & Lifting

Lifting and moving patients creates a high risk for back injury and musculoskeletal disorders. To reduce the potential for injury:

- Move along the side of the patient's bed instead of reaching across while performing bedside tasks.
- When manually moving the patient, stand as close as possible to him/her without twisting the back, keeping the knees bent and feet apart. To avoid twisting the spine, make sure one foot is in the direction of the move. Using gentle rocking motions can also reduce exertion.
- Pull the patient up in bed when the head of the bed is flat or down. Raising the patient's knees and encouraging him/her to push (if possible) also helps.
- Ensure proper employee training of all assistive devices such as slide boards, gait belts, rollers, hoists, etc.



Needles & "Sharps"

Needles and other "sharps" are a serious hazard in any health care setting, and contact may expose an individual to blood that contains pathogens which can pose a lethal risk. Be sure to:

- Avoid the use of needle devices when safe/effective alternatives exist.
- Use devices with safety features.
- Avoid re-capping and bending needles that might be contaminated.
- During transport, use secure sharps containers to prevent spilling.
- Follow standard precautions, infection prevention, and general hygiene practices consistently.
- Only those professionals trained and certified in the use of needles and sharps should be providing this service.

Driver Safety

Driving from client to client increases the risk for motor-vehicle accidents. Practice these safety measures:

- Always wear a seatbelt.
- Avoid distracting activities such as cell phone use, eating, drinking, or adjusting radios and other controls while driving.
- Avoid driving when overtired; incorporate training on fatigue management.
- Use detailed maps or a GPS to determine routes before leaving.
- Have vehicles serviced regularly.
- Implement a written Driver Safety Program for all new and existing employees.

Program Manager:



Insurance Carrier:



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