

# Safe Resident Handling: What long-term care administrators need to know

## Resident handling can be dangerous.

Moving a resident may not seem dangerous, particularly to an experienced healthcare worker. But the fact is that resident handling puts your employees at risk every day.

Almost 80% of time-loss claims reported to WCB Nova Scotia by healthcare workers involve strains, sprains, and inflammation (musculoskeletal injuries). And over half of these claims are linked to lifting, moving, and repositioning residents, patients, and clients.

That's why healthcare workers are more likely to be injured at work than workers in any other sector. In 2015, nearly 250 long-term care/home care employees were absent from work for one full year due to work-related injuries.

## We all pay a price for workplace injuries.

The annual cost of workplace injuries in Nova Scotia's healthcare sector is estimated at more than \$100 million. This includes the cost of workers' compensation and uninsured costs like overtime, recruitment, retraining, lost knowledge and experience, administrative time, and negative outcomes for residents.

The damage isn't just monetary. Injuries cause significant pain and suffering for your employees, forcing some to leave the profession altogether and others to return to work with reduced physical capabilities.



## Your job is to ensure that your workers can safely do theirs.

You can help protect the safety of your staff and residents through a Safe Resident Handling Program.

Under *Nova Scotia's Occupational Health and Safety Act*, employers are required to take every reasonable precaution to ensure the health and safety of all people at the workplace.

More specifically, *Nova Scotia's Occupational Safety General Regulations* say employers must provide equipment and training when "the lifting or moving of a thing or a person may be a hazard to the health or safety of a person at the workplace."

Your employees are lifting or moving people regularly – a Safe Resident Handling Program is important.

## A successful Safe Resident Handling Program starts at the top.

Here's how you can start the process:

- ✓ Tell your employees you're committed to implementing an effective Safe Resident Handling Program.
- ✓ Identify and assess job-related strains, sprains, and inflammation (musculoskeletal) hazards.
- ✓ Implement and use equipment and tactics to minimize the risk of injury (i.e. safe work procedures, mechanical assists, safe storage, and equipment and mobility device maintenance).
- ✓ Advise and train your workers about potential hazards and safe resident handling procedures.
- ✓ Encourage your workers to report symptoms or concerns to their supervisor(s) early.
- ✓ Follow up to ensure your preventive measures are working.

## Care is contagious.

It's a simple equation. When your workers are cared for and receive proper training and support, they're in a much better position to care for your residents. Keep your workplace safe and everyone wins.

Change doesn't happen overnight. A Safe Resident Handling Program requires changes to work processes and behaviours at all levels of your organization. By making these crucial changes, you can significantly reduce the risk of injury to staff and residents.

## Learn more about workplace safety.

Check out these resources for more information about keeping your workplace safe and Safe Resident Handling Programs.

AWARE-NS:

[awarens.ca/initiatives/safe-resident-handling-and-mobility](http://awarens.ca/initiatives/safe-resident-handling-and-mobility)

Department of Labour and Advanced Education:

[novascotia.ca/lae/healthandsafety](http://novascotia.ca/lae/healthandsafety)

WCB Nova Scotia:

[worksafeforlife.ca](http://worksafeforlife.ca)

Soteria:

[soteriahealth.ca](http://soteriahealth.ca)

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