Patient Lift/Transfer Guidelines

POLICY:

Patient care providers will use the proper lift or transfer devices when lifting or transferring patients who are unable to move independently.

PURPOSE:

To make lifting and transferring patients easier and safer for the patient and the patient care provider.

SPECIAL INFORMATION:

1. Key Points for patient care provider:
   A. Assess the patient.
   B. Assess the area.
   C. Decide on equipment
   D. Know how to use the equipment
   E. Plan the lift and communicate the plan with other co-workers as well as the patient.
   F. Work together, including actions of more than one co-worker as well as the patient.
   G. Have the right equipment available, in good working order and conveniently located.

2. Key Assessment Criteria
   A. Ability of the patient to provide assistance.
   B. Ability of the patient to bear weight.
   C. Upper extremity strength of the patient.
   D. Ability of the patient to cooperate and follow instructions.
   E. Patient’s height and weight.
   F. Special circumstances likely to affect transfer or repositioning tasks, such as abdominal wounds, contractures or presence of tubes, etc.
   G. Specific physician orders or physical therapy recommendations that relate to transferring or repositioning patients, weight bearing status. (For example, a patient with a knee or hip replacement may need a specific order or recommendation to maintain the correct angle of hip or knee during transfer.)

PROCEDURE:

Guidelines for the use of lift/transfer devices for patients that do not move independently:

1. Slide board will be used in all bed to bed and bed to cart transfers.
2. Hoyer Lift will be used if:
   A. There are no contraindications to the patient’s legs being adducted
   B. The patient was being transferred with this method prior to hospitalization.
3. Sara Lift will be used if:
   A. There are no contraindications to weight bearing or shoulder movement.
   B. The patient can hold with one or both hands.
   C. The patient is able to tolerate weight bearing.
   D. The patient was being transferred with this method prior to hospitalization.
   E. The patient weighs less than 350 pounds.

4. Walker/Crutches/Cane will be used if:
   A. The patient was using one prior to hospitalization.
   B. Ambulation would be steadier with upper extremity support.
   C. Wheel walkers should be used if the patient has/is:
      I. Respiratory compromised
      II. Severe osteoporosis
      III. Unable to follow sequence.
   D. Standard walker
      I. Adjust height and width when patient stands upright, the bend of wrist is level with top of walker.

5. Gait belts to be used with transfer and ambulatory patient.

If the patient care provider has any question about the proper use of transfer devices’, they should consult the Physical Therapy Department.