

COMMUNITY LIVING DURHAM NORTH

LIFTING

Policy No: C-23 (Human Resources)

Effective Date: February 22, 2010

Last Revision: February 10, 2020

Last Review: June 26, 2023

Rationale:

To ensure the health and safety of all employees.

Policy Statement:

Ergonomics injuries are a major issue in health care and social service settings, in part because employees try to lift things that are too heavy for them, or they try to lift people, manually, which is always an awkward process, instead of using the proper mechanical aids. Therefore, and in compliance with directives of the Ontario Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development, Community Living Durham North has implemented this lifting policy.

CLDN has invested heavily in mechanical aids and it is mandatory that they be used on every single occasion that their use is prescribed, for a particular supported person. An Employee who lifts a supported person in preference to using a mechanical lift will be subject to discipline.

Senior staff will ensure that mechanical lifts and similar devices are regularly inspected, properly maintained and, when necessary, replaced.

Approved by: Clare Suggitt  
for the Board of Directors

Date: February 10, 2020

COMMUNITY LIVING DURHAM NORTH  
LIFTING

Procedure No: C-23-1

**General Matters**

Effective Date: April 14, 2015

Last Revision: June 26, 2023

Last Review:

- Staff are required to perform different tasks that may require lifting. It is important to ensure that the following rules for safe lifting outlined by the Public Services Health and Safety Association are followed:
  - Use your leg muscles, large hip and knee joints while lifting.
  - Use your abdominal muscles. Tuck your buttocks under then bend knees and lift. If you lift with the small of your back it causes enormous strain on the discs and ligaments of the lower back, possibly causing back injuries.
  - Keep object close to your body while lifting.
  - Avoid reaching over your head to lift.
  - Place feet firmly, shoulder width apart.
  - Avoid twisting your back.
  - Place one foot in the direction of the lift and then pivot both feet in this direction while moving.
  - Lift in stages if necessary
  - If the person or object slips, lower them/it gently to the floor while tightening your abdominal muscles and avoiding rotation.
  - Stand upright and bend backwards gently five or six times after lifting
  
- A common cause of lower back pain is poor posture. In normal posture, the spine is curved in the shape of a gentle letter “S”. When this curve is exaggerated by poor posture, the delicate suspension system is altered, straining the back. The position of your pelvis determines your ability to maintain the normal “S” curve of your spine. When the abdomen sags and the body slouches, the pelvis tilts forward and the lower back arches too much. When the abdominal muscles are tight and firm, the pelvis is tilted normally and the gentle, normal lower back curve is achieved.
  
- Aside from standing tall, having good posture means always using your body safely. You should try to use good posture in all daily activities, but especially when lifting. Safe body mechanics involves maintaining the body in the best possible position to prevent gravity from causing stress or strain on your back. Unsafe body mechanics, such as bending at the waist with the knees straight, cause the body to be poorly balanced. This forces the back muscles to work too hard to keep the body balanced, creating a high risk of injury.

- Staff should only lift what they are physically capable of lifting. Staff must not lift more than 50lbs/22kg.
- The website of the Public Services Health & Safety Association, [www.pshsa.ca](http://www.pshsa.ca), contains a wealth of good information including a series of bulletins called *Fast Facts*, with titles like “How Much Can You Lift?” and “How Does My Back Work?”

Procedure No: C-23-2

**Lifting Plans**

Effective Date: June 30, 2011

Last Revision: June 26, 2023

Last Review:

- Everyone supported by CLDN has a Personal Support Plan. If the person has a physical disability they will also have a personalized lift plan which will clearly lay out when, and how, lifting is to occur. Lift plans will be submitted to the Joint Health and Safety Committee for approval before implementation and will be reviewed annually (each September), thereafter.
- The agency will ensure that at least one employee receives formal training in Ergonomics. This staff will then be made available as a resource to staff teams to assist in the development of lift plans for specific supported persons. All employees receive basic ergonomic awareness training through our internal training portal as part of their orientation.
- As part of their site orientation, new staff in homes where Mechanical Lifts are present will be trained, by the Team Leader or designate, in how to use them, and in the lift plans that are specific to each person residing in the home. The new staff must also read and sign off on each plan.
- All staff are required to actually demonstrate a proper lifting procedure, and fully appreciate the importance of following each individual lift plan in order to be deemed fully trained. This training will be documented on the *Site Orientation Checklist* (form H3c).
- Mechanical Lifts present in a group home will be checked annually by the supplier of the lift to verify that they can safely do the jobs required of them.
- Mechanical Lifts and slings must also be inspected daily, by staff, prior to use, in order to ensure that straps are not frayed and that they are in good working order. Staff will not use the lift if there is any defect or safety concern about the mechanical lift or the slings. Any defects must be reported to the Program Manager or designate immediately
- Mechanical lifts are designed to be used safely by one person, but some Support Plans will specify that two staff need to act together to in order to lift a person safely. Where this is the case, two staff must be present or the lift cannot be performed.

Procedure No: C-23-3

**The Back-Up Plan, for Exceptional Circumstances**

Effective Date: February 22, 2010

Last Revision: June 26, 2023

Last Review:

- A complication can easily arise in the case of a mechanical lift that calls for two people. Only one staff may be present, and of course one staff is the norm on the overnight shift. So, if a supported person falls out of bed during the night, if they cannot propel themselves back into bed, and if their lift plan calls for two people, do the following:
  - Call the on-call Manager;
  - Explain the situation and the fact that a second person is required in order to perform the lift safely;
  - The Manager will want to know, minimally, who fell out of bed, when did it happen, are there signs of injury, and how do you plan to keep the person calm and comfortable until the second person arrives;
  - Then, remain with the person while you both wait for the Manager, or another staff that she dispatches;
  - You have the case specific training, so when the second person arrives, you will lead the lift and tell the second staff how he can best assist you.
  - In exceptional circumstances staff will be directed by the on-call manager to make the person as comfortable as possible on the floor while waiting for the staff on the next shift to arrive.
- Mechanical lifts are not present in every home. Indeed, they are not present in any home in which all of the residents are able-bodied. And yet, a fainting spell, a stroke, or a fall and a resulting broken ankle, could all leave an able-bodied person on the floor and unable to get up. In this situation 911 should be called.
- What the employee, or employees, cannot do in this situation is lift the person off the floor. CLDN has a “no lifting” policy and this applies even to what used to be called a two-man lift.
- Even in this kind of situation, an employee who lifts the supported person, or the employees who perform a “two-man” lift, will be subject to discipline. It is acknowledged that this might seem at odds with the values of our organization, but it is a step that the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training, and Skills Development insists upon as being, ultimately, in the best interest of all concerned.
- There are two Mobile Mechanical Lifts; one is kept at the Port Perry Community Supports Program and the second is kept at Concession 13. Arrangements can be made to have the mobile mechanical lift used at an alternate location in the event a supported person is injured, has had a surgery, or some other circumstance that decreases their

mobility to the point of requiring a lift. A lift plan must be developed and approved prior to use of the mobile mechanical lift.

Approved by: Glenn Taylor  
CEO

Date: June 26, 2023