

COMMUNITY LIVING DURHAM NORTH

LIFTING

Policy No: C-23 (Human Resources)

Effective Date: February 22, 2010

Last Revision/Review: April 14, 2015

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, 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: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
for the Board of Directors

## COMMUNITY LIVING DURHAM NORTH

### LIFTING

Procedure No: C-23-1

#### **General Matters**

Effective Date: April 14, 2015

Last Revision/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.
- 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/Review: April 14, 2015

- Everyone supported by CLDN has a Personal Support Plan. If the person has a physical disability this Plan 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 an employee receives formal training in Ergonomics. This staff will then provide basic “Ergonomics Awareness” training to all agency staff.
- As part of their site orientation, new staff in homes where Mechanical Lifts are present will be trained, by the Team Leader, 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.

- This in-service training will include the staff being lifted in a sling so that he or she will fully appreciate what the experience is like. Also, the staff will be required to actually demonstrate a proper lifting procedure 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.
- Mechanical lifts are designed to be used safely by one person but some Support Plans will specify that two staff need to act together 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

Effective Date: February 22, 2010

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

- 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 he cannot propel himself back into bed, and if his 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, and for 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.
- 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, there are two potential solutions. 911 is one option, and in the case of a broken ankle it is clearly the best option, because the person needs medical attention. The second possibility is to access the Mobile Mechanical Lift that is at Union Avenue group home. Obviously, assessing the nature of the problem or injury is the very first step, and

whether you call 911 or the on-call Manager, in order to access the mobile lift, will depend on this assessment.

- 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, where a mechanical lift is not immediately available, 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 insists upon as being, ultimately, in the best interest of all concerned.

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

CEO