

Assisting people who have fallen

May 2011

What is the problem?

Manually helping people after a fall.

People fall for many reasons, including poor health, footwear or clothing, lighting or slippery floors.

What are the risks?

Workers may be at risk of musculoskeletal injuries (eg sprains and strains) to the back, neck, shoulders, knees or arms when trying to help people who have fallen.

What is a solution to the problem?

Workers should assess the fall risk and implement adequate controls for each person.

The risk of injuries can be eliminated or reduced by using the following safety measures.

Lifting people after a fall

To safely lift a fallen person, employers should:

- ensure a suitably qualified person medically assesses the fallen person before attempting to lift them
- if possible, ensure workers use verbal prompts with the fallen person so they roll onto their knees and climb onto a chair to eliminate manual handling
- ensure workers are adequately trained and able to safely use all relevant equipment
- use suitable mechanical aids (eg overhead tracking and slings) to transfer people from the floor
- use suitable mobile hoists and slings if overhead tracking is not provided.

Person transfers self or uses aid (eg chair)

This may require one worker with the assistance of the fallen person.

The worker should follow these steps in order:

1. place a chair next to the fallen person and instruct them to roll onto their side
2. instruct the person to push up into a sitting position and then a kneeling position using the hand and elbow closest to the floor
3. place the chair in front of the person and instruct them to push down on the chair seat and stand up or swing around to sit on the chair.

Electric sling hoist

This may require two workers without the assistance of the fallen person.

Workers should follow these steps in order:

1. position the sling under the fallen person by rolling them onto both sides
2. position and lower the hoist over the fallen person
3. attach the sling to the hoist. Using the hoist mechanics, transfer the person off the floor and lower them onto the bed
4. detach the sling from the hoist and remove the hoist
5. instruct/assist the person to roll over and remove the sling.

Electric hoist with stretcher frame

This may require two workers without the assistance of the fallen person.

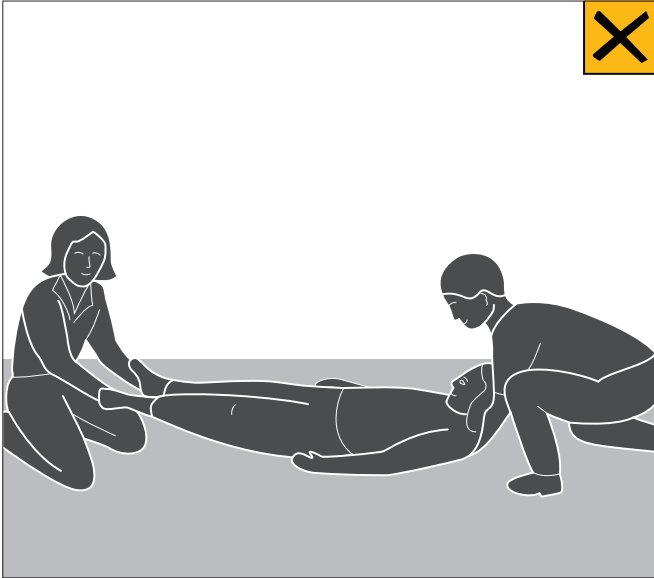
Workers should follow these steps in order:

1. position the frame around the fallen person
2. position the slats under the person and attach to the frame
3. position and lower the hoist over the frame and attach to the frame
4. use the hoist mechanics to lift the frame and person off the floor
5. lower the frame onto the bed and detach from the hoist
6. remove the slats and dismantle frame.

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A Health and Safety Solution **Assisting people who have fallen**

The problem



Do not manually lift a person from the floor.

The solution



Transfer the fallen person from the floor using an electric sling hoist.

Further information

WorkSafe Advisory Service

Toll-free 1800 136 089

Email info@worksafe.vic.gov.au

worksafe.vic.gov.au

Code of Practice – *Manual Handling 2000*

A Handbook for Workplaces – *Transferring People Safely*

Transferring people safely – *Patient transfer summary*

Injury Hotspot – *Health and Aged Care Services*

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