

Policy Applies to:

All staff employed by Mercy Hospital. Credentialed Specialists will be supported to meet policy requirements

Related Standard:

- Health and Safety at Work Act 2015
- Health and Safety at Work Act (General Risk and Work Management) Amendment Regulations 2023
- Ngā Paerewa Health and Disability Services Standard Section 2, Section 4
- ISO 45003:2021 – Occupational Health and Safety Management – Psychological Health and Safety at Work
- WorkSafe NZ (2023) Good Practice Guideline: Managing Psychosocial Risks at Work

Rationale:

To keep staff safe by ensuring staff use safe moving and handling techniques when undertaking all moving and handling tasks. Musculoskeletal injuries are often influenced by psychosocial factors such as time pressure, fatigue, and staffing levels; Mercy Hospital's Safe Moving and Handling Programme supports the organisation's psychosocial-risk management system (ISO 45003 alignment).

Definitions:

- **LITE Principles:** A framework for safe moving and handling, involving the assessment of Load, Individual capability, Task, and Environment.
 - **Load:** Assess the weight, size, shape, and nature of the object or patient to determine the safest way to handle it.
 - **Individual:** Consider the physical capabilities and limitations of the person performing the task to ensure they can handle it safely.
 - **Task:** Evaluate the specific actions required, including lifting, pushing, pulling, and the frequency or difficulty of the task.
 - **Environment:** Review the physical surroundings and conditions, such as space, floor surfaces, lighting, and equipment, to ensure a safe handling environment.
- **HoverMatt:** A specialized air inflated device used for transferring patients to reduce strain on staff during patient transfers and handling.
- **HealthLearn:** An online learning platform providing competencies and training on safe patient handling and other healthcare practices.
- **Tautoko:** Internal Mercy competency system, wrapped around many healthLearn courses

Cultural Considerations:

Mercy Hospital recognises the importance of cultural safety and respects the diverse cultural values, beliefs, and practices of all patients and staff. All moving and handling interactions are carried out in a way that upholds dignity, privacy, and mana motuhake (personal autonomy).

For Māori patients, awareness of the concepts of *tapu* (sacred) and *noa* (free from restriction) is essential. Sensitivity is shown when handling or making physical contact, especially with the head, which is considered *tapu*. Staff are encouraged to seek guidance where needed and to ensure that the patient and their whānau understand and are comfortable with any handling approach.

Cultural safety education is included in staff training to promote respectful communication, understanding of tikanga (customary practices), and recognition of individual preferences. All actions should aim to enhance *mana* and maintain trust within the care relationship. Verbal consent should be gained wherever possible before patient repositioning.

Objectives:

Mercy Hospital is committed to a coordinated and structured organisation wide safe handling approach involving:

- Systematic identification, assessment and control of all moving and handling risks.
- Provision of equipment to reduce heavy loads, awkward movements and postures and excessive repetition.
- Ergonomics considered in design of equipment and work areas.
- Provision of staff education and training in the safe use of equipment, patient moving and handling techniques.

Implementation:

- New clinical staff are required to complete the HealthLearn patient moving and handling competency and practical introduction to LITE (Load, Individual, Task, Environment) principles in respect to patient moving and handling for their orientation.
- During the orientation period, staff are shown relevant safe moving and handling protocols, equipment, and methods for their specific work areas.
- Annual safe handling updates will be provided by Health and Safety Representatives or experienced staff in the clinical area or by attendance at a clinical orientation safe moving refresher.
- Risk Category Audit (Ergonomic) review existing controls are appropriate
- Product evaluation includes assessing equipment's safe handling requirements
Manual and overhead hoists (including slings) are serviced annually and certified by an approved and competent service provider in accordance with AS/NZS ISO 10535:2023 Hoists for the Transfer of Disabled Persons – Requirements and Testing.
- Any patient transfers in the operating theatre with patients that weigh $\geq 100\text{Kg}$ should be completed using a HoverMatt Lifting and moving aids should be made available where moving and handling involves heavy, awkward or consistent tasks

Safe Handling Programme Management

The Health and Safety Specialist is responsible for

- Coordinating and reporting on the hospital safe moving and handling programme

- Supporting Managers in assessing risks and controls related to moving and handling in their areas of responsibility and making improvements where necessary
- Supporting areas in safe moving and handling training requirements
- Review of safe handling management and training requirements for leaders of people
- Review of moving and handling incidents and near misses and support of any investigations

Responsibilities of managers, ACN's and leaders

Managers, ACN's and leaders are accountable for ensuring moving and handling risks are managed by:

- Working with Health and Safety Specialist and health and safety reps to identify and review Moving and Handling risks and controls
- Working with the Health and Safety Specialist and the Health and Safety reps to ensure all staff have appropriate moving and handling training
- Establishing and supporting safe work methods/ procedures to eliminate or minimise moving and handling risks in their area, and ensuring compliance with best practices
- Reviewing and supporting necessary equipment purchases
- Ensuring that staff have access to equipment and material designed to minimise moving and handling risks in the workplace
- Ensuring equipment is maintained (as indicated by manufacturer or service) in correct working order
- Facilitating the provision of new employees' orientation to the departmental safe handling procedures and equipment
- Ensuring that staff attend moving and handling training
- Monitoring and reviewing safe handling accidents for risk management opportunities
- Support and coordinate moving and handling incident and near miss investigations

Employees

Employees are responsible for performing moving and handling tasks safely. They will:

- Comply with principles of safe handling, departmental procedures and best practice
- Use LITE principles to assess and identify risks before performing a task. They then plan, if needed, to ensure that any moving and handling they do is safe handling.
- Report hazards, near misses, incidents and any maintenance need they encounter in the workplace.
- Report any limitation on their ability to perform moving and handling tasks safely
- Attending moving and handling training as directed.

Vulnerable Workers

Pregnant Workers

Tasks must be individually assessed for staff who are pregnant. Where manual handling poses a risk to the worker or unborn child, alternative duties, additional mechanical aids, or work modifications should be considered in consultation with the staff member and their manager.

Staff Recovering from Injury or Illness

Tasks must also be individually assessed for workers who are returning to work following injury or illness. Alternative duties or graded return-to-work arrangements should align with recommendations from healthcare providers and the Return-to-Work Policy.

Training and Compliance

Assignment rules and clinical orientation will ensure that clinical staff are assigned this requirement.

Managers and leaders are responsible for ensuring new staff have safe moving and handling orientation in their department within one month of:

- Commencing work at Mercy hospital
- Transfer from another department or area

Annual Safe Moving and Handling training should be completed with all staff that carry out safe moving and handling tasks as part of their work.

Employees are responsible for keeping up to date with their annual training by attending training sessions and completing Tautoko competencies.

Managers and coordinators are to ensure time is made available for staff to complete safe moving and handling.

Monitoring and Reporting Moving and handling injury and near-miss data are analysed quarterly by the Health and Safety Rep Committee.

- Key performance includes training completion rates, incident severity trends, and corrective-action closure rates.
- Results inform the annual Health and Safety Board Report and Continuous Improvement Plan.

Evaluation:

- Hazard/Risk register
- Training records
- Incident forms
- Product Evaluation Committee records
- Maintenance and construction planning meeting minutes
- Service area safe handling equipment audit report
- Hoist test reports
- Ergonomic Risk Category Audit
- Health and Safety annual plan

External

- *WorkSafe NZ (2023). Good Practice Guide: Moving and Handling in Healthcare and Community Care Settings* (update to 2018 Code)
- *Te Whatu Ora (2023). Moving and Handling Programme Guidelines and Toolkit* (supersedes many DHB resources).

Internal

- Manual Handling, HealthLearn
- Hazard Identification Policy
- Falls Prevention and Management Policy
- Hoist Moving and Handling, Clinical Services Work Manual
- Patient Moving and Handling Work Manuals on SharePoint
- Tikaka Best Practice Guidelines