



VITALS

For Medical Transport Professionals

A Weekly Safety Newsletter

Thinking About Bariatrics in Medical Transportation Part2

Engineering Controls

The goal of engineering controls is to minimize manual patient handling. Examples of engineering controls include:

- Specialty vehicles (bariatric units)
- Ramps with winches
- Lifts
- Lateral transfer aids
- Specialty cots

It should be noted that electric specialty cots which require charging and re-charging may require modification of the electrical system of the vehicle in which they will be used. The impact of this electrical modification on the ability to charge other equipment should be assessed. Battery failure that cannot be immediately rectified is not an option for any piece of equipment. This is critical for the cot as well. The manner in which the cot is secured should meet the manufacturer's requirements.



Administrative Controls

The US Department of Labor in an OSHA bulletin published in 2002 created the following "General Administrative Consideration" for its inspectors. "Is there evidence that the employer has implemented an effective ergonomics process that provides management support, involves employees, identifies problems, implements solutions, addresses reports of injuries, provides training and evaluates ergonomics efforts?"

Examples of Administrative Controls:

- General lifting policy
- Gurney, wheelchair and scooter safety policies
- Policy related to weight
- Policy requiring use and availability of engineering controls
- Mandatory lift assist policy
- Policy requiring identification and amelioration of patient handling hazards
- Employee selection, training and fitness for duty
- Advanced training for Resource Personnel
- High risk manual handling techniques banned

Behavioral Controls

Engineering and Administrative controls are useless unless the workforce engages in the behaviors their implementation requires. Behavioral controls give the employees necessary cognitive and psychomotor skills. Management oversight, enforcement and example create the culture of safety that makes employees want to use the resources available to them.

Examples of Behavioral Controls:

- Primary training in body mechanics and lifting techniques
- Regularly scheduled refresher training in body mechanics and lifting techniques
- Primary and regularly scheduled refresher training in fitness for duty
- Education and training in proper selection and use of engineering controls
- Clinical tools (algorithms and patient assessment tools). These items should be incorporated into the call taker or dispatch protocols so that appropriate resources may be allocated.

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