



anf policy

australian nursing federation

no lifting¹

Preamble

A no lifting policy provides for a safer approach to patient/client handling whereby the manual lifting of patients/clients is eliminated or minimised wherever possible. The ANF No Lifting policy promotes the use of mechanical lifting aids and other equipment to assist nursing and midwifery staff in the moving, transferring and handling of patients/clients, to ensure that minimal force or exertion of the body is employed by nurses and midwives when handling patients.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the broader ANF *Occupational Health and Safety Policy*.

It is the policy of the Australian Nursing Federation that:

1. Maintenance of a person's independence by encouraging mobility is a priority of nursing and midwifery.
2. People should be encouraged to assist in their own transfers², including bearing their own weight, as much as possible.
3. The manual lifting of people must be eliminated in all but exceptional circumstances eg life threatening situations.
4. The manual handling needs of the person should be assessed and documented prior to admission or, if this is not practicable, as soon as possible after admission to a health or aged care service.³
5. Assessment of the manual handling needs of the person should be carried out by nurses or midwives involved in the care of that person, in conjunction with a physiotherapist when necessary, and should ensure that the physical effort used by the nurse or midwife is minimal and that the manual handling is within the skills and capacity of those providing nursing or midwifery care.
6. Where people are unable to lift themselves and physical effort by the nurse or midwife is required then lifting aids must be used. Lifting aids assist with transfers onto or out of bed or trolley, bed to chair, and with moves up, down and around the bed and they assist with other person handling activities. Lifting aids include: mechanical lifting machines and hoists; and rigid or fabric sliding devices.
7. All manual handling needs should be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis.
8. Health, aged care and community services should include a No Lifting policy in their manual handling policy.
9. Employers are required by regulation to identify, assess and control risk associated with all manual handling activities in the workplace. Such risk identification, assessment and control must be carried out in consultation with nursing and midwifery staff, health and safety representatives and OHS Committees where established.

10. Nurses and midwives must comply with policies and procedures established by the employer, in consultation with staff and their representatives, in order to reduce occupational health and safety risks associated with manual handling activities.
11. Staffing levels and skill mix should be adequate to meet the nursing and midwifery care needs of people in the health or aged care service including their manual handling needs, and to allow the safe use of aids and equipment when required.
12. Nurses, midwives and nursing and midwifery managers should receive induction and continuing education and training in:
 - occupational health and safety rights and responsibilities;
 - occupational health and safety policies and procedures;
 - assessment of the manual handling needs of people;
 - manual handling risk factors and hazards such as causes of injuries;
 - manual handling risk management techniques and processes;
 - correct use of lifting aids and other manual handling equipment; and
 - techniques for moving or transferring patients involving minimal physical exertion.
13. Nurses and midwives and their representatives should be involved in risk control strategies including the selection of lifting aids and other equipment, fittings and furniture designed to control manual handling risks.⁴
14. Equipment such as lifting aids should be trialled before purchase to evaluate their capacity to meet the requirements of both the person being lifted and the staff using the equipment.
15. All equipment must be maintained in good working order and in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
16. The workplace, including people's homes, must provide adequately modified clear space for: the safe movement and/or transfer of people; the safe use of lifting aids and other equipment; and the safe and accessible storage of lifting aids and other equipment.
17. Following a manual handling injury, employers must initiate a risk identification, risk assessment and risk control process to eliminate or reduce the risks of another occupational injury.
18. Nurses and midwives should be provided with rehabilitation following a manual handling injury.
19. Research in developing and implementing strategies to prevent and reduce occupational manual handling injuries suffered by nurses and midwives should be promoted and conducted.

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references

1. This policy refers to the manual handling of patients or clients who are unable to lift themselves. Please refer to the ANF policy on Occupational health and safety and to state and territory occupational health and safety legislation for further information.
2. Moving from bed to chair, bed to trolley, and moving up or down the bed.
3. Includes people receiving health or aged care services at home.
4. Refer to the ANF policy on *Occupational health and safety* for information about the other responsibilities of employers in relation to occupational health and safety issues.