Infection Prevention & Control (IPC) Guidelines For Selection, Cleaning & Storage of Mechanical Patient Lifts and Patient Handling Aids Including Slings, Sliders and Transfer Belts

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SOURCE:
Infection Prevention & Control (IPC)

PURPOSE/OBJECTIVES
The purpose of this guideline is to provide consistent IPC recommendations for the selection, cleaning, and storage of mechanical patient lifts and patient handling aids such as slings, transfer belts, sliders and other related devices. Risk of transmitting infection is high due to the frequency of contact and potential for soiling associated with the use of these items. Consistent and appropriate use of the recommendations in this guideline reduces this risk.

This document provides best practices for reducing the risk of the transmitting infection. Other aspects, not related to IPC (such as patient safety, staff safety, device maintenance, etc.), should be assessed by the appropriate staff and programs with the expertise to manage those aspects.

The term “patient” is used throughout this document and refers to patients, residents, and clients.

APPLICABILITY
This guideline applies to all AHS staff, medical staff, volunteers, students and other persons acting on behalf of AHS.

GUIDELINE

1. General
   1.1. All patient handling aids, whether designated as reusable or single-patient use must be dedicated to use on one patient for the duration of their hospitalization or need for the aid.
   1.2. Patient handling aids labelled by the manufacturer as single-patient use or disposable, shall be used on only one patient, then discarded according to the manufacturer’s instructions (usually according to the recommended service life, when damaged or soiled, or when the patient no longer needs it).
   1.3. Reusable mechanical patient lifts and patient handling aids are classified as ‘non-critical’ medical devices, and must be thoroughly cleaned and low-level disinfected or laundered before use on a different patient.
   1.4. The manufacturer’s instructions must be followed for cleaning and disinfecting and/or laundering.

This document has been reviewed by the following stakeholders: Infection Prevention & Control; Linen and Environmental Services; Quality Improvement; Clinical Engineering; Workplace Health & Safety
1.5. There must be a written procedure (posted and easily accessible) for cleaning and disinfection or laundering that includes the following information:
   • a statement that cleaning/disinfection/laundering must be in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions and applicable standards
   • manufacturer’s instructions for cleaning and disinfection or laundering
   • use of approved hospital cleaning and disinfection products
   • required cleaning frequency
   • routine cleaning schedule that includes documentation
   • persons responsible for cleaning (e.g. environmental services, nursing staff, etc.)
   • Placement of signage that indicates whether the item is clean or contaminated
   • staff training in cleaning and disinfection techniques
   • appropriate use of personal protective equipment

1.6. There must be a written and documented procedure using the manufacturer’s instructions for preventative and annual maintenance.

1.7. There must be capability to clean and disinfect and or launder reusable mechanical patient lifts and patient handling aids. Use AHS-approved cleaning and disinfection products and follow Linen and Environmental Services processes for patient handling aids that can be laundered.

2. **Selection of Mechanical Patient Lifts and Patient Handling Aids**
   2.1. The following AHS programs must be consulted to review device-specific instructions and recommendations before the purchase of mechanical patient lifts and patient handling aids:
      • Clinical User
      • Linen and Environmental Services
      • Infection Prevention & Control
      • Contracting, Procurement, and Supply Management (CPSM)
      • Facility Maintenance and Engineering (FME)
      • any other relevant programs

2.2. Selection of mechanical patient lifts and patient handling aids:
   2.2.1. **Mechanical Patient Lifts**
      • The lift must be constructed with smooth, non-porous material with clean lines that facilitates cleaning and disinfection.
      • Hand controls must be resistant to moisture damage and easily cleaned and disinfected.
      • Detailed cleaning, disinfection procedures and preventative maintenance information for all lift components must be provided in writing by the manufacturer.
      • Manufacturer’s recommended disinfection products must have a Health Canada drug identification number (DIN) and be approved for use in AHS.
2.2.2. **Patient Handling Aids (Transfer Slings, Belts and Sliders)**
   - Aids must be constructed of materials that are easily laundered or cleaned and disinfected.
   - Detailed cleaning and disinfection and/or laundering, inspection and storage procedures must be provided in writing by the manufacturer.
   - The facility must have the capability to clean and disinfect and/or launder the aid according to the manufacturer’s instructions.
   - Reusable aids should be labelled with clear cleaning, disinfection, and/or laundering instructions.
   - Disposable single-patient use aids should be clearly labelled as such.
   - Manufacturer’s recommended service life and inspection specifications information should be documented and available for staff.
   - There should be an area on the label to record patients’ names.

3. **Cleaning of Mechanical Patient Lifts and Patient Handling Aids**
   3.1. **Mechanical Patient Lifts (including Hand Controls)**
      3.1.1. Manufacturer’s instructions must be followed for cleaning and disinfection of lifts and hand controls.
      3.1.2. Clean and disinfect lifts after every use and according to a regular cleaning schedule as indicated in the manufacturer’s instructions. For further guidance on cleaning ceiling lifts, refer to the AHS Environmental Services document “Ceiling Lift: Cleaning Protocol Standard”.
      3.1.3. Clean and disinfect all surfaces of the lift by:
         - Removing any visible soil (blood & body fluids) immediately after use
         - Disinfect using an approved low level disinfectant.

   3.2. **Patient Handling Aids (Transfer Slings, Belts and Sliders)**
      3.2.1. **Disposable or Single-patient Use Handling Aids**
         3.2.1.1. Aids labelled as disposable/single-patient must not be laundered nor reused on other patients (Note: manufacturers do not provide laundering instructions for disposable patient handling aids).
         3.2.1.2. Aids must be discarded when:
               - the manufacturer-recommended service life is reached
               - damaged or soiled
               - no longer required by the resident/patient.

      3.2.2. **Reusable Handling Aids**
         3.2.2.1. All aids labelled as reusable by the manufacturer must be cleaned and disinfected or laundered according to manufacturer’s instructions. Some can be cleaned and low level disinfected at point of use; others are cloth or woven and must be laundered.
         3.2.2.2. Aids labelled as reusable by the manufacturer must be cleaned, disinfected and/or laundered between different patients.
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3.2.2.3. Aids labelled as reusable by the manufacturer and dedicated to the use of one patient shall be cleaned and disinfected/laundered:
- when visibly soiled
- according to a routine schedule
- before use with another patient.

3.2.2.4. Sufficient supply of aids must be available to accommodate patient demand and cleaning/disinfecting/laundering times.

3.2.2.5. Always inspect the integrity of the equipment (e.g. loose seams, tears in fabric) before use.

4. Storage of Mechanical Patient Lifts and Patient Handling Aids

4.1. Mechanical Patient Lifts
4.1.1. Once used, lifts should be cleaned at point of use or stored in a soiled hold until cleaned. Lifts waiting for cleaning should be identified as contaminated.
4.1.2. Clean lifts should be labelled as clean and must be stored in a clean equipment holding area or room.

4.2. Patient Handling Aids (Transfer Slings, Belts and Sliders)
4.2.1. Single patient-use and dedicated aids must be labelled with the patient’s name and stored according to manufacturer’s instructions in a clean area in the patient’s room (e.g. patient locker, closet, or sling hook).
4.2.2. Clean reusable aids must be stored in a clean location, according to manufacturer’s instructions (e.g. clean linen storage, clean utility room).
DEFINITIONS

1. Patient – all individuals who receive or have requested care or services from Alberta Health Services. This term is inclusive of residents and clients. (Infection Prevention and Control, 2011)

2. Mechanical Patient Lifts: Equipment used to lift, transfer, reposition or move patients. Examples include mobile (portable) sling lifts, stand assist lifts, mechanized lateral transfer aids and ceiling mounted lifts. (Work Safe Alberta)

3. Patient Handling Aids: Equipment used to assist in the lift or transfer process. Examples include slings, belts, and sliders. (Work Safe Alberta)

4. Non-Critical Medical Device – A Medical Device which either touches only intact skin but not mucous membranes, or does not directly touch the client. (Alberta Health, 2011)

5. Single Patient Use – A term given to medical equipment/devices that may be used on a single client/patient/resident and may be re-used on the same client/patient/resident, but may not be used on other clients/patients/residents. (Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee (PIDAC), 2010)
References


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**REVISIONS**
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