



Safer Practice Notice

Status

- Active
- Updated
- Resolved

Zone Application

- Provincial
- North
- Edmonton
- Central
- Calgary
- South

Bed Alarms-Safe use and configuration

Issue

A resident fall and a resulting review revealed that bed alarms may not function properly in certain circumstances. Importantly:

- Bed alarms are an alternative strategy for falls prevention.
- Alarms may be permanently integrated into the bed or applied as an external device.
- Most alarm sensor/pressure pads have a limited life expectancy.
- The process for resetting bed alarms varies from brand to brand.
- Each brand of alarm has a unique interface with the call bell system



Figure 1- external bed alarm

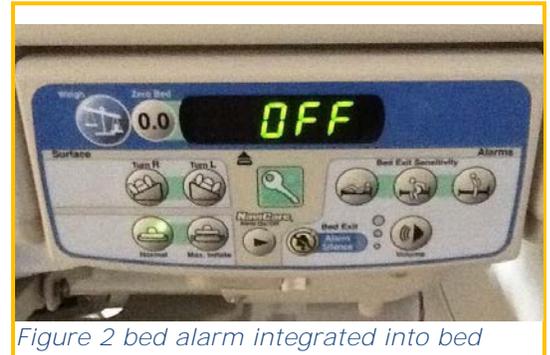


Figure 2 bed alarm integrated into bed

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Action

- Managers should consult with Facilities Maintenance/Clinical Engineering about the types of bed alarms in use to determine configuration practices and develop the most appropriate plan for regular audits/maintenance of alarms
- Managers should work with educators to ensure that new and existing staff receive training on the specific alarms used by their program
- The multi-disciplinary team should determine the best falls prevention plan based on the clinical needs of the patient

Tips:

- Change & clean the sensor/pressure pads as per manufacturer's instructions
- Familiar yourself with the reset process, stay with the patient for the recommended period of time for the reset to take effect
- Ensure you have plugged the proper adapter into the call bell system
- Teach the patient & family about bed alarms to ensure they understand their role in promoting safety
- Avoid placing an external bed alarm on an air mattress
- Avoid relying solely on bed alarms as a means of monitoring patients, they are not a substitute for good practice & do not address the root cause of the falls risk. Bed alarms should not be used as an alternative to mechanical restraint

For Action By:

- Managers
- Educators
- Nurses
- Allied Health
- Facilities/ Clinical Engineering

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