

Rehab TIP SHEET #3

Lift Transfers of Patients

Mechanical lifts are used for a patient who is unable to assist with transferring in and out of a bed or wheelchair or shower chair because he/she is unable to sit independently and/or his weight and/or size prevents one person from safely and effectively transferring the patient. A mechanical lift is also used to help protect the caregiver from straining his/her back due to lifting.

Steps to Transferring Using a Mechanical Lift

- 1) With the patient lying on his/her back, roll the patient to one side.
- 2) Make sure the sling is placed under the patient with the handle side of the sling away from the patient.
- 3) The sling should be placed with the leg straps (divided leg sling) or bottom edge (solid sling) below the buttocks and the top of the sling at the head. Half of the sling should be rolled up and tucked under the patient between the bed and his/her side. The other half of the sling should be laid flat on the bed behind the patient, similar to applying a draw sheet.
- 4) Gently roll the patient onto his/her back with the sling underneath.
- 5) Roll the patient towards you on his/her other side and bring the rolled up half of the sling out from underneath to lie flat on the bed.
- 6) When using a divided leg sling, make sure to cross the leg straps before hooking them onto the lift.
- 7) Bring the lift to the center of the patient's stomach and lower it until all of the straps can reach the hooks on the lift.
- 8) Make sure the wheelchair is near the bed with the armrest in place. Lock the wheel locks of the wheelchair and remove the footrests in preparation for transferring the patient from the bed to the wheelchair. Apply the hooks of the sling to the lift: the shortest available hook at the head of the person and the longest available hooks at the legs of the person.



- 9) Gradually begin lifting the patient off of the bed with the lift. Be careful to monitor the patient's head and legs for safety.



- 10) When the patient is raised enough to clear the bed and wheelchair seat, begin moving the lift towards the wheelchair. Be careful not to let the patient in the lift bump into anything that could cause injury to the patient or caregiver.

- 11) When the patient is centered above the chair, put your hands on his/her knees, and push him/her back as far as possible into the chair. Then slowly lower the lift

pushing the patient's body back into the chair. If 2 people are performing the transfer, one person should stand behind the chair and hold the handle on the back of the sling pulling the patient back into the chair while he/she is being lowered.

- 12) Once the patient is safely lowered in the chair remove the hooks on the sling from the lift. If using a divided leg sling, uncross the sling between the legs and stand in front of the patient leaning him/her forward while pulling upwards on the sling to remove it.

- 13) Place the footrests back on the chair and place the patient's feet in the footrests.

- 14) Make sure the patient is sitting all the way back into the chair with his/her bottom touching the back of the wheelchair and the body centered in the chair with space between the patient's hips and the armrests on each side.

- 15) Make sure the patient's clothing is as smooth as possible to decrease pressure areas.

