

LIFTING AND TRANSFERRING

PURPOSE:

This policy aims to minimise the risk of injury to clients and staff in the workplace by defining the safe lifting and transferring practices to be used consistently throughout the organisation. Adherence to the policy will ensure clients are safe and comfortable while being assisted with daily routines and potentially reduce the incidence of work injury and compensation claims. In implementing the policy, however, it is recognised that clients have the same rights as the general community to be involved in consultation and participate in decision making which affects their lives. Breakaway Toowoomba policy on Decision and Choice Making details the services' responsibility to respect this right in all areas of service delivery including assistance with lifting and transferring.

The Lifting and Transferring policy is applicable to all staff working with Breakaway Toowoomba clients in a designated work site eg centre, home, adult day service, community venue, place of employment and school. The policy draws on best practice standards in related fields and requirements of the Workplace Health and Safety Act.

POLICY:

Breakaway Toowoomba has a 'no lift' policy. "No lift" is defined as where:

The manual lifting and transferring of clients is eliminated in all but exceptional circumstances or life threatening situations. Manual lifting and transferring may only continue if it does not involve lifting most or all of the client's weight, where the client is heavier than 20 kilograms, and/or pose a significant risk to the client and/or staff person as assessed by an occupational or physio-therapist or the Safety Adviser.

'Exceptional circumstances' may include:

1. A client who (because of the no lift policy) would need to be left in a compromised or painful position for a substantial period of time because of the unavailability of a hoist (eg hoist required repair, client is waiting for appropriate equipment to be supplied, client lives in a remote centre). In this case, a suitable alternative method of transferring the client must be found eg two-person lift, replacement equipment, call ambulance personnel.
2. A client whose health status may be substantially compromised by the 'safest' transfer method eg respiratory difficulties.
3. 'Life threatening situations' refer to those circumstances where the client's life is at immediate risk (eg during a fire; choking) and there is a need to remove quickly to safety.

GENERAL STANDARDS

1. All adults who are unable to weight bear during a particular transfer should be transferred using a hoist.
2. All adults who cannot reliably take their weight during a transfer (eg knees may give way, spasm may cause instability, require 3 carers for safe transfer) should be transferred using a hoist.
3. All children with mobility support requirements receiving support from Breakaway Toowoomba should be provided with a risk assessment by an occupational or physio-therapist to ascertain their current and future lifting and transferring needs considering a range of risk factors including: weight, spasm, movement patterns, and environmental hazards.
4. The client/family will be supported by Breakaway Toowoomba to understand the benefits of adherence, where possible, to safe lifting and transferring practices.
5. It is recognised that clients (and their families) generally want to retain as much independence and participation in transfers as possible. Efforts will be made to encourage and support this where it does not conflict with Breakaway Toowoomba workplace health and safety responsibilities.

PROCEDURE:

In accordance with Section 36 of the Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995, all staff members have an obligation to ensure workplace health and safety. All Breakaway Toowoomba staff shall:

1. *comply* with Breakaway Toowoomba policy;
2. specifically *follow correct procedures* as detailed in transfer documentation;
3. not place at risk their own health and safety or that of any other person during any lifting and transferring task;
4. not wilfully or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided for workplace health and safety;
5. not wilfully injure him/herself;
6. *use any personal protective* equipment provided by Breakaway Toowoomba or the client relating to safe lifting and transferring practice;
7. *report* to the supervisor any difficulty experienced during any lifting and transferring task;
8. *document hazards*, incidents and accidents relating to lifting and transferring on the dedicated Breakaway Toowoomba form;
9. ensure the client is encouraged and shown how to participate in their own transfers when it is assessed by a therapist or Safety Adviser as safe and practical;
10. ensure communication with the client and staff person is appropriate and effective to maximize compliance with safety;
11. *refrain* from using faulty equipment and report in line with Breakaway Toowoomba protocol for broken/malfunctioning equipment
12. *attend* any sessions required prior to or post-employment demonstrating principles of back care, safe use of hoists and slings and safe use of relevant protective equipment;
13. *attend* training sessions in specific transfer methods for individual clients as required.

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Approved:

Executive Officer, Lifestyle Support Supervisor/Respite Support Supervisor/Client Support Supervisor/Project Officer must ensure the following occurs. This is a *mandatory obligation* under the Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995.

1. The transfer documentation of all clients (where relevant) is reviewed at least every 12 months for currency and referral for therapy review made if required.
2. Carers/families and Coordinator are alerted to changes in circumstances that may require review of lifting and transferring prescription.
3. Transfer documentation is stored in an accessible but discrete location to facilitate staff reference and all staff are aware of the location of documentation.
4. Staff's compliance with lifting and transferring prescription and general work practices in relation to workplace health and safety is monitored.
5. Appropriate staff attend initial training sessions provided by therapists demonstrating recommended lifting and transferring method for specific clients.
6. Staff attend training session by the Executive Officer or designated staff member prior to their first shift demonstrating basic principles of back care and hoist and sling use.
7. Staff attend Back care awareness session upon commencement of work with Breakaway Toowoomba.
8. Staff attend a training session demonstrating general principles of safe use of hoists and slings and troubleshooting and maintenance requirements, on commencing work at Breakaway Toowoomba.
9. Appropriate equipment and replacement equipment is available and maintained in working order to facilitate safe lifting and transferring practices.
10. During discussion with clients and families about possible future service provision the implications for the individual client and Breakaway Toowoomba Workplace Health and Safety Policy, and in particular the Lifting and Transferring Policy, are made clear.

The Workplace Health & Safety Officer

1. *Provide* regular Back care awareness sessions to Breakaway Toowoomba staff. Families will be encouraged to attend.
2. *Be aware* of up-to-date back care approaches and convey this knowledge to the Executive Officer, Supervisors and new staff/volunteers at induction.
3. *Provide training in risk assessment* of lifting and transferring of clients to all therapists, Executive Officer and Supervisors.
4. *Act as a resource person* to therapists regarding assessments and transfers of clients.
5. *Monitor* the management of all accidents and incidents relating to transfers and lifting to *ensure* a thorough investigation is conducted and appropriate *recommendations are made to and implemented* by management to minimise the risk of injury to staff and clients.
6. *Observe staff at work* to identify risks in lifting and transferring practices.
7. Be a resource person to Executive Officer, Supervisors and staff in relation to safe work practices, safety equipment, general work place health and safety issues, information and training

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Approved:

Approved (Executive Officer) *David Bell*Date *18.06.09*

Approved (Chairperson) *Paul E Devine*Date *18.06.09*

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