SAFETY MANUAL for Homecare Workers and Personal Support Workers

OREGON Home Care COMMISSION

FEBRUARY 2012

The Department of Human Services (DHS) will not discriminate against anyone. This means DHS will help all who qualify. DHS will not deny help to anyone based on age, race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, religion, political beliefs, or disability. You can file a complaint if you think DHS singled you out because of any of these things.

If you have questions or need this document in a different format, please contact the Oregon Home Care Commission or your local DHS office.

Si tiene preguntas que hacer o necesita este documento en un formato diferente, por favor, comuníquese con Oregon Home Care Commission o su oficina local de DHS.

Если у Вас есть вопросы или Вам нужен этот документ в ином формате, пожалуйста, обратитесь в Комиссию по Уходу на Дому (Oregon Home Care Commission) или Ваше местное отделение DHS.

March 2012

Dear Homecare Worker/Personal Support Worker:

The Oregon Home Care Commission is committed to encouraging you as a homecare worker or personal support worker to perform your job duties as safely as possible.

This Safety Manual is a tool for you to use along with the health and safety training classes offered by the Oregon Home Care Commission to help you prevent injuries to yourself and/or your consumer/employer.

Please take the time to review the Safety Manual and register for our health and safety training classes. You can only provide quality services if you take care of yourself and perform your job in a safe manner to prevent injuries.

The Commission values the importance of maintaining a drug-free and tobacco free workplace, and we encourage you to respect your consumer/employer, yourself, and the Oregon Home Care Commission by keeping your workplace drug-free and tobacco free. If you are ready to quit tobacco and want to learn more, please call the Oregon Quit line at 1-800-784-8669.

Thank you for your commitment to safety, and thank you for providing the vital services needed by seniors and people with disabilities. These services allow those whom you serve to continue to live as independently as possible in their own homes.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Miller

Cheryl Miller
Executive Director
Oregon Home Care Commission

Table of contents

A. Introduction 1
A.1 Overview 1
A.2 Safety guidelines 1
A.3 Health and safety training 2
A.4 STEPS Program 2
A.5 Registry & Referral System (RRS) 3
A.6 Drug-free workplace 3
A.7 Roles 3
A.8 Communicating with your employer about safety concerns 4
A.9 Workers' compensation claims assistance 5
B. Emergencies 7
B.1 Emergency action plan 7
B.2 Earthquakes 8
C. Hazards in and outside the home 11
C.1 Hazard assessment 11
C.2 Housekeeping 12
C.3 Step stool/utility ladder safety 13
C.4 Walking surfaces 13
C.5 Proper lighting 14
C.6 Oxygen safety 14
C.7 Fire safety 15
C.8 Poison safety 16
C.9 Electrical safety 18
C.10 Firearms safety 18
C.11 Outside hazards 18
C.12 Animal safety 19
C.13 Driver safety 20
C.14 Violence in the workplace 21

D. Protecting your body at work 23
D.1 Preventing strains and sprains 23
D.2 Risk factors 24
D.3 Transfers 25
D.4 Durable medical equipment and assistive devices 25
D.5 Body mechanics for workers 26
E. Protecting against disease transmission 29
E.1 Infectious disease 29
E.2 Protecting yourself from disease 31
E.3 Gloves 32
E.4 Cleaning and sanitizing 33
E.5 Universal precautions 34
E.6 Other exposure hazards 35
Workers' Safety Supply List 37
Emergency Action Plan 38
Sample Safety Checklist 39

A. Introduction

A.1 Overview

This safety manual for workers is designed to help you stay safe and avoid injury and illness related to in-home services. It is designed to give you ownership in your own safety and health. Take some time to go through this manual and use it as a reference. By following these suggestions, you can greatly reduce your risk of accidents and illnesses.

A.2 Safety guidelines

While you focus on your employer's safety and health, your safety is very important. If you get hurt, you may not be able to do your job.

Below is a list of general guidelines to help keep you safe. More information about each of these topics is found throughout this manual.

- Practice safety at all times.
- Think safety for both you and your employer.
- Take the time to do it right.
- Keep quick access to a phone to call 911.

- Use gloves and personal protective equipment when handling chemical, blood or body fluids/substances.
- Follow the Task List and any other instructions carefully.
- Lift safely.
- Use utility ladders and step stools instead of chairs.
- Use gloves and good ventilation when working with household chemicals.
- Discuss smoke detectors with your employer if you are concerned about their placement and working order.
- Use good lighting.
- If concerned about firearms and ammunition in the workplace, discuss it with your employer.
- Don't use broken equipment.
- Know your emergency evacuation escape routes and back-up plans.
- Ask for help if there is a hazard you can't resolve with your employer.
- Observe the drug-free workplace policy.

A.3 Health and safety training

The Oregon Home Care Commission offers health and safety training classes monthly throughout the State:

- Taking Responsibility in Personal Safety
- Preventing Disease Transmission
- Protect Against Sprains and Strains

These are just a few of the many types of training classes offered by the Oregon Home Care Commission. To view a listing of our training classes, check out our newsletter at www.oregon.gov/DHS/spd/adv/hcc/training.shtml.

To register for a training class or to sign up for the training newsletter, call 1-877-867-0077, Option 2, or 503-378-3957 in Salem or send an email to Training.OHCC@state.or.us.

A.4 STEPS Program

STEPS to Success with Your Worker

The Oregon Home Care Commission provides a training program for employers that receive in-home services.

STEPS provides education and support to consumers on how to:

- Recruit, hire, and manage a HCW;
- Communicate and resolve conflicts;
- Create a backup and safety plan;
- Understand the tasks that a HCW can provide; and
- Know their rights and responsibilities as a consumer who employs HCWs.

A.5 Registry & Referral System (RRS)

The Oregon Home Care Commission's Registry and Referral System (RRS) is available throughout the entire state. As a worker, you will be able to take control of your own career by managing your availability, where you want to work, and the services you are willing to provide. You will be responsible for updating your information in the RRS every 60 days or more often if needed. To visit our Registry and Referral System website, go to https://www.or-hcc.org. Contact us if you have questions (toll free 1-877-867-0077, Option 1).

A.6 Drug-free workplace

The Oregon Home Care Commission is committed to protecting the safety, health, and well-being of consumers of in-home services and workers through establishing a drug-free workplace program. The drug-free policy can be viewed on OHCC's website at www.oregon.gov/DHS/spd/adv/hcc/tools_hcw.shtml.

A.7 Roles

As a homecare worker, you provide services to the employers that are authorized by the Department of Human Services.

Below is a brief description of the roles of each party involved in this three-tiered relationship. You will find a detailed description of the roles and responsibilities of each party in the Homecare Worker Guide that you received during Orientation. If you did not receive the guide or you need the updated version, please contact the local office in your area or download a copy from the Web at http://dhsforms.hr.state.or.us/Forms/Served/SE9046a.pdf.

As a homecare worker, you are the employee of the consumer/employer, who is the person you provide services for and who hires you and supervises your work. Your employer has the right and the responsibility to hire, fire, schedule work, supervise and direct employees that provide services. The employer may also have a designated representative such as a family member or friend help him/her meet some of these responsibilities.

The local office of the Department of Human Services is where your employer's case manager works. The case manager authorizes the number of service hours and determines what services you can provide for your employer each month. The authorized hours are based on the assessed service needs of the employer. The local office processes your enrollment as a provider in the Client-Employed Provider Program and issues you a provider number for payment. The case manager authorizes payment to the homecare worker for the hours worked. The local SPD/AAA office has a support specialist who processes vouchers and issues your provider payments.

A.8 Communicating with your employer about safety concerns

Your safety in the workplace is important, but when your workplace is someone's private home, it may be difficult to make changes. Open communication between you and your employer is important. Reducing risks and hazards to your safety will likely make the home safer for the consumer, so both can benefit.

However, people often don't welcome changes in their habits, routines, or living space. Always remember, it is your employer's home, and you do not have the right to move or change anything without permission. You do have a right to ask for reasonable accommodations to keep yourself safe. State rules for the In-Home Services program (OAR 411-030-0050) state: "SPD/AAA may not authorize a service provider … when dangerous conditions in the service setting jeopardize the health or safety of the service provider … and necessary safeguards cannot be taken to minimize the dangers."

Examples of safety concerns include tripping hazards, being asked to perform a task that could cause injury or is not on the Task List, exposure to disease, actual or potential abuse or assault of the worker, smoking while using oxygen, illegal activities, or weapons in the home.

Listed below are some tips for talking with your employer about safety concerns.

1. If you are comfortable talking with your employer, do so. Use "I" messages about how his/her behavior or the hazard that affects you. Such as, "I am worried about tripping over your oxygen tubing when I work. Can we work to find a solution?" Or, "I am concerned about hurting myself if I do the task that way. Are you willing to try doing it a different way so both of us stay safe?"
2. Offer support and encouragement if the employer seems reluctant to make changes or doesn't know how to make the changes.
3. Follow up your initial discussion. For example, you might bring it up again in a day or two and ask if he/she has considered making the changes to your work activities or the work environment. Again offer support and share your concerns.

4. If you are afraid of being harmed, leave the home and call the case manager or local office from a safe place nearby. If you are in immediate danger, call 911. If the consumer cannot be left alone due to his/her need for assistance, call 911 and ask for a welfare check on the person. Stay nearby until someone comes or you are instructed as to what to do.
5. If you are uncomfortable discussing this with your employer, or if your employer won't or can't change a dangerous situation, call their case manager. Ask for advice on what to do and follow his/her instructions.
6. Always keep notes of dates, summaries of discussions, who you spoke to, and outcomes.

You may suggest the STEPS program for your employer. This can provide him/her with information about working with a worker, maintaining a safe workplace, communication tips, and more. If your consumer/employer has not received the Safety Manual for Homecare Employers, ask him/her to request one from their case manager.

A.9 Workers' compensation claims assistance

Homecare workers and personal support workers (as of January 1, 2011) are eligible for workers' compensation coverage for injuries that occur on the job. The Oregon Home Care Commission (OHCC) will facilitate filing workers' compensation claims. SAIF Corporation is your workers' compensation insurance carrier.

How to file a claim:

If you are employed as an Oregon homecare worker or personal support worker and are injured while performing your duties, you may file a workers' compensation claim. The following simple steps will ensure that your claim is processed correctly.

- Tell your consumer/employer right away that you were injured while working in his or her home.
- Contact the Oregon Home Care Commission's (OHCC) Workers' Compensation Coordinator at 888.365.0001 or 503.378.3099 (Salem).
- Tell the representative that you are a homecare worker or personal support worker and want to file a claim.
- If you seek medical treatment for your work injury, tell the doctor that you were hurt on the job. Ask for and complete Form 827. (Identify yourself as a homecare worker or personal support worker on this form.)

If you cannot reach the Oregon Home Care Commission, call SAIF at 1-800.285.8525 and ask for a claim form to be sent by mail. Identify yourself as a homecare worker or personal support worker on this form and return the completed form to:
SAIF Corporation
400 High Street SE
Salem, OR 97306

To protect your rights and help process your claim:

- Report any work injury immediately.
- Respond quickly to phone calls and letters requesting information from the OHCC's Workers' Compensation Coordinator and SAIF Corporation.
- Complete and return Form 801.
- Sign the medical release form so medical information about your injury can be gathered to process your claim.
- Cooperate with efforts by SAIF and the OHCC's Workers' Compensation Coordinator to return you to a transitional job if you are unable to perform your normally assigned tasks.

IMPORTANT

Filing a claim does not automatically qualify you for workers' compensation benefits.

Deliberately making false or misleading statements or representation for the purpose of obtaining any benefit or payment is considered fraud and is punishable by law.

OHCC Workers' Compensation Claims Assistance
676 Church Street NE
Salem, OR 97301
Telephone: 1-888-365-0001 or 503-378-3099

B. Emergencies

B.1 Emergency action plan

The following is a **PLAN TO PREPARE FOR EMERGENCIES**. Checking out your work area and preparing for emergencies with your employer can save lives. (See the Emergency Action Plan on page 38 of this manual. This plan should be developed with your employer.)

- **Life threatening emergencies.** Whenever a life-threatening emergency occurs, call 911. Give the operator the telephone number, address, nearest major cross street, and directions to the home. Write out this information in advance and post it near all of the phones and/or the refrigerator in the house as soon as possible after starting a new job.
- **Non-life threatening emergencies.** Write out a list of phone numbers that your employer wants you to call in the event of a non-life threatening emergency. This includes doctor, hospital, dentist, police/sheriff, poison control, ambulance, adult protective services, child protective services, family members, neighbors, and case

manager. Post the list by the telephone and/or on the refrigerator.

- **Home evacuation.** The most important action in a fire emergency is getting everyone safely outside. It is important to conduct regular fire drills with your employer. If you discover a fire, call 911. If your employer uses a wheelchair or has mobility issues, talk with him/her in advance about the best procedure for evacuating the building. With your employer's permission, contact their local fire department to notify them that a resident lives there with a wheelchair or a mobility issue and ask if they have a recommendation for safely evacuating an immobile individual.
- **Emergency action plan.** Take a few moments to complete the Emergency Action Plan on page 38 of this manual with your employer. Draw a basic layout of your workplace and identify exits with arrows. Post the completed sketch near the phone — you may need it in an emergency.
- **Temporary relocation sites.** Try to make arrangements to move to a temporary site in case your worksite becomes unsafe for re-entry. This could be a friend's home or local church. Choose a second site in case the first site is not available in an emergency. You and your employer should discuss this and make plans before an emergency occurs.
- **Other emergency equipment.** It may be necessary to have an emergency kit which includes a first aid kit, blankets, food, water, radio, flashlight, and other provisions on hand. Medications should also be available in a seven (7) day supply. Keep a list of all medications including names, dosages, and quantity. Medications should be updated regularly to ensure that they are still the correct medications and dosages. Expiration dates also need to be considered. Discuss emergency preparedness with your employer and let him/her decide whether to keep emergency supplies on hand. Identify in your Emergency Action Plan where the emergency kit is kept in the home. If your employer has a vehicle, ask him/her to consider putting an emergency kit in the automobile.

B.2 Earthquakes

To prevent injures from earthquakes, eliminate or minimize hazards when you can.

- Are bookcases too full? Would they topple easily?
- Are breakable items on open shelves?
- Do cupboards have latches? Can items be set away from the edge?
- Could you add non-slip materials under dishes, glassware, etc.?
- Be aware that electricity may go out or that sprinkler systems or fire alarms may turn on.

Your number one priority during an earthquake is you. Keep yourself safe so that you can assist your employer when the shaking stops. The Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) "Earthquake Safety Checklist" suggests the following action during an earthquake.

If you are indoors:

- Drop, cover, and hold. Take cover under a sturdy desk, table, bench, or against an inside wall and hold on. If there is no desk or table near you, cover your face and head with your arms and crouch in an inside corner of the building.
- Stay away from glass, windows, outside doors and walls, and anything that could fall such as lighting fixtures and furniture.
- If you are in bed when the earthquake strikes, stay there. Hold on and protect your head with a pillow unless you are under a heavy light fixture that could fall. In that case, move to the nearest safe place.
- Stay inside until the shaking stops and it is safe to go outside. Most injuries during earthquakes occur when people are hit by falling objects while entering or leaving buildings.
- Be aware that electricity may go out or that sprinkler systems or fire alarms may turn on.

If you are outdoors:

- Stay there.
- Move away from buildings, trees, streetlights, and utility wires.

If you are in a moving car:

- Stop as quickly as safety permits, pull to the side of the road, and stay in the car.
- Avoid stopping near or under buildings, trees, overpasses, and utility wires.
- Do not attempt to drive across bridges or overpasses that have been damaged.
- Proceed cautiously after the earthquake has stopped, watching for road and bridge damage.

If you are trapped under debris:

- Do not light a match.
- Do not move about or kick up dust.
- Cover your mouth with a handkerchief or clothing.
- Tap on a pipe or wall so that rescuers can find you. Use a whistle if one is available.

Shout only as a last resort — shouting can cause you to inhale dangerous amounts of dust.

When the ground stops shaking, FEMA suggests the following actions:

Check for injuries:

- **If anyone has stopped breathing**, give mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. Stop any bleeding injury by applying direct pressure to the wound. Do not move seriously injured people unless they are in immediate danger of further injury. Cover injured persons with blankets to keep them warm.
- **Keep a battery-powered radio** with you so you can listen for emergency updates and news reports.
- **Be aware of possible tsunamis** if you live in a coastal area. Tsunamis are also known as seismic sea waves. When local authorities issue a tsunami warning, assume that a series of dangerous waves is on the way. Move inland to higher ground as quickly as possible.
- **Do not use the telephone** unless there is a severe injury.
- **Wear shoes** in areas near fallen debris or broken glass.

Key points to remember:

- Call 911 in a life-threatening emergency.
- Keep a list of important numbers near the telephone.

C. Hazards in and outside the home

C.1 Hazard assessment

What is a hazard assessment?

It is a visual inspection/evaluation done for the purpose of identifying hazards and potential hazards in the employer's home so that hazards can be removed or reduced. (See sample safety checklist on page 39 of this manual.)

How do you control hazards?

- Eliminate or remove the hazard; for example, you might pick up pet toys to prevent tripping on them. Removing an area rug or repositioning an electrical cord also eliminates a hazard. Putting a pet in an animal crate or placing the pet in another room can also eliminate a hazard while working.
- Reduce the hazard. Maybe you cannot get rid of the hazard, but you could look for ways to make it less dangerous. For instance, if you cannot reposition a sharp-edged table in a home to prevent a bumping hazard, you could cover or pad the sharp edges if your employer allows it. Manual lifting is a hazard. Using a mechanical aid such as a lift device can reduce the hazard.

- Use “Personal Protective Equipment” (PPE) which is equipment or clothing worn by a person that is designed to prevent injury or illness from a specific hazard. Examples of PPE include safety glasses, gloves, kneepads, waterproof aprons, and protective footwear. This equipment can sometimes be provided through the local office and/or your employer’s insurance. The employer’s case manager has more information.
- When you start a new job, review the workplace for hazards with your employer and talk about a plan for controlling these hazards by eliminating, reducing, and using PPE. Seek additional help from your employer’s case manager if needed.

Examples of common household hazards:

- Electrical — missing outlet covers, extension cords that are worn or missing insulation.
- Sharp objects — syringes, knives, sharp edges on bed frames.
- Tripping — oxygen hoses, telephone and extension cords, toys, pets.
- Slipping — ice, snow, spilled liquids.
- Lifting — oxygen tanks, furniture, people.
- Layout of home — path of travel, stairs, location of furniture.
- Chemicals — cleaning products, medications.
- Fire — smoking, smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, clutter.

C.2 Housekeeping

Good housekeeping is one of the most important factors in maintaining a safe work area. Many workers are injured each year because they trip, stumble, or step on objects that are in their way. These accidents are often blamed on the worker’s carelessness when actually these accidents are the direct result of poor housekeeping. When you see something lying around that may be a potential risk for a slip, trip, fall, or injury, ask your employer if you can put it away or move it to a safer location. Some ideas for reducing the risk include:

- Floors, landings, and stairs should be kept free of clutter and tripping hazards such as electrical cords, and miscellaneous household clutter.
- Keep drawers of dressers, desks, and filing cabinets closed when not in use.
- Do not use boxes, chairs, etc., in place of step stools/utility ladders.
- Store material on shelves in a manner to prevent falling; heavy objects should be placed on lower shelves.

C.3 Step stool/utility ladder safety

- Inspect the step stool/utility ladder first, and if it is defective or unstable, don't use it.
- Never use a metal ladder for electrical work, including changing a light bulb.
- Set the step stool/utility ladder on a solid, level surface and never place it on a box or unstable surface to increase the height.
- Never stand on the top step.
- Keep the step stool/utility ladder away from doorways and walkways where it might be bumped while you are using it.
- Make sure locking arms are locked.
- Return the step stool/utility ladder to its proper storage place so it is readily available.
- Chairs should not be used as step stools/utility ladders.

C.4 Walking surfaces

- **Be observant.** Look for sidewalk and entryway defects as you enter your employer's residence. Cracks, holes, slippery, uneven surfaces, and other surprises such as toys in the walkway may cause you to trip.
- **Remove hazards, if appropriate.** If it's a hazard going in, it will be a hazard coming out. If you clear a path into the residence, you will be helping to prevent an injury to yourself and others.
- **Wear proper footwear.** Leather soled shoes on wet or slick surfaces are an accident waiting to happen. In snow, ice, and/or rain, wear rubber-soled or other traction shoes to keep yourself upright and improve your balance. Open-toed sandals are not appropriate footwear for workers.

As you get familiar with your work area, be sure to look for slip, trip, and fall hazards as you did outside. Look for:

- Walkway obstructions.
- Torn and wrinkled carpets, door mats.
- Rugs with curled-up edges and those without non-skid backs.

With your employer's permission, remove or fix the hazard, recommend it for repair, or if you can't do anything right away, at least make a mental note to watch out for it until it can be removed.

C.5 Proper lighting

Sufficient lighting must be available in order to do your work safely. If you need more lighting, you might be able to use a higher wattage bulb. A portable light may be useful. Make sure flashlights are available in case of a power outage. Please report your concerns to your employer.

C.6 Oxygen safety

If your employer uses oxygen, there are several things to be aware of for everyone's safety.

- Oxygen is not flammable, but it can cause other materials that burn to ignite more easily and to burn far more rapidly. The result is that a fire involving oxygen can appear explosive-like.
- Oxygen is of great benefit to those in need of oxygen therapy, but it should always be handled with caution and awareness of the potential hazards.
- There are three common ways of providing oxygen therapy. Oxygen can be delivered to the home in the form of a gas in various-sized cylinders or as a liquid in a vessel. The third way to provide oxygen therapy is by using an oxygen concentrator.

Oxygen Safety

- Never smoke while using oxygen.
- Warn visitors not to smoke near anyone if using oxygen.
- Post at least one NO SMOKING sign in a prominent place at the entry to the home where the oxygen is being used.
- Stay at least five feet from gas stoves, candles, lighted fireplaces, and other heat sources.
- Oxygen cylinders and vessels must be kept in a well-ventilated area (not in closets, behind curtains, or other confined spaces). The small amount of oxygen gas that is continually vented from these units can accumulate in a confined space and become a fire hazard.
- Keep oxygen cylinders and vessels a minimum of eight feet from heaters, heat producing, and electrical appliances.
- Secure oxygen cylinders and vessels to a fixed object or place in a stand.
- Oxygen cylinders and vessels must remain upright at all times. Never tip an oxygen cylinder or vessel on its side or try to roll it to a new location.
- Always operate oxygen cylinder or container valves slowly. Abrupt starting and stopping of oxygen flow may ignite any contaminant that might be in the system.

- Turn the cylinder valve off when not using oxygen.
- Only use a properly grounded wall outlet for your oxygen concentrator.
- Do not use extension cords for your oxygen concentrator.
- Do not place the electrical cord or oxygen tubing under rugs or furniture.
- Do not use any flammable products like cleaning fluids, paint thinner, or aerosol sprays while using oxygen equipment. Some organic materials can react violently with oxygen if ignited by a hot spark.
- Use water-based lubricants on your lips and hands. Don't use oil-based products like petroleum jelly, petroleum based creams or lotions.
- Do not use bedding or cloths made of wool, nylon, or synthetic fabrics as these materials have the tendency to produce static electricity.
- Children or untrained individuals should not be handling or operating oxygen equipment.
- An all-purpose fire extinguisher should be close by when using oxygen equipment.

C.7 Fire safety

Careless smoking is the most frequent cause of fire deaths. Some in-home smoking fires are caused by unattended burning cigarettes, smoking in bed, smoking around flammable materials (gas, paints, aerosol cans, newspapers, and other flammable items), and improper disposal of cigarettes and matches. Please be aware of these issues if your employer smokes.

Smoke alarms/detectors

Places of residency may or may not have smoke alarms/detectors depending upon building code requirements at the time of construction. If there are none in your place of employment, ask the employer to check with the local building department and/or housing agency for compliance. In addition, some fire departments will give out free smoke alarms.

Smoke alarms/detectors should be tested a couple of times a year. A good time to check them is when daylight savings time begins and ends.

Emergency exit options

Are there steps or stairs? Are there objects in the way? What is the fastest way to evacuate your employer? Check on evacuation routes. (**See Emergency Action Plan, Page 38**)

Fire extinguishers

Read the instructions and get training on how to use it. Ask your employer to have it serviced annually. The fire extinguisher should be easily located and identified in the Emergency Action Plan.

Kitchen stove

Make sure the kitchen stove is off when not in use.

Fireplace or wood stove

Make sure the damper is open before fires are lit. Fireplace screens are essential and need to be kept in place. Ashes should be removed only when the fire is out and the ashes are cool. Place ashes in a metal container. Never store ashes inside the residence; take the container outside. To ensure that ashes are not hot, pour water on them.

C.8 Poison safety

A poison is anything someone eats, breaths, gets in their eyes or on their skin that can cause a rash, sickness, or potential death. Poisons can be solids, liquids, sprays, and gases.

Common poisonings include:

- Cleaning products
- Medicines
- Cigarettes and cigarette butts
- Beauty products, perfumes, and nail polish removers
- Carbon monoxide gas (CO) (usually from cars and heating devices)
- Insect sprays, weed killers, and plant food
- Liquids used in cars (such as antifreeze, wiper fluid, and motor oil)
- Paint and paint-removal products
- Plants in the house and yard
- Animal bites and stings
- Spoiled food

If you think that someone has been poisoned, call the Poison Center help line (1-800-222-1222). Medical experts are available at this center 24/7 to provide help with any possible poisoning. Don't wait for signs of poisoning.

If you call the poison center, calmly tell the specialist:

- Your name and phone number.
- The name, age, and weight of the poisoned victim.
- Any problems or symptoms the person is having.
- The name of the poison.
- The amount of the drug or poison missing.

Remember these important rules when there is a poison emergency:

- When a person is not breathing or moving in response to being touched or shaken, call 911 immediately. This may be a life-threatening event.
- When someone has swallowed a poison or has taken the wrong medicine, remove the poison/medicine from their reach. Call the Poison Center help line (1-800-222-1222).
- Do not try to make the person vomit unless instructed to do so by a medical professional. Any attempts to gag or vomit the poisoned victim can make matters worse.

For more resource information on poisonings, check out the Oregon Poison Center's website at www.ohsu.edu/poison.

C.9 Electrical safety

What is a GFCI?

GFCI is a fast acting circuit breaker that senses small imbalances in the circuit caused by current leakage to ground and, in a fraction of a second, shuts off the electricity.

To reduce the possibility of electrocution:

- If you have a choice of outlets, use the Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI).
- Extension cords should not be frayed and should not be used to hang lighting or be used as permanent wiring.
- Equipment should be grounded (plugs should have one prong that is wider than the other).
- Electrical panel boxes should be covered by an appropriate panel cover, but not obstructed.
- Never use electric devices (heater, blow dryer, etc.) near a tub with water in it.

If your employer is renting, it is the landlord's responsibility to install safe wiring and ensure that the residence is "electrically" safe. If your employer owns the residence, encourage him/her to explore options with their case manager for funding necessary repairs. If the employer does not want to make repairs and you feel a situation is unsafe, refer to "Communicating with your Employer About Safety Concerns" on page 4 of this manual.

C.10 Firearms safety

Your employer may have firearms in the home. If you are working with someone who carries a gun or keeps one too close for your comfort, discuss this with your employer. Voice your concerns and try to negotiate something that will make you feel safe. Ask him/her to put the gun away in a secure location while you are present. Refer to "Communicating with your Employer About Safety Concerns" on page 4 of this manual.

C.11 Outside hazards

Not all potential hazards to your safety are inside your employer's residence. Be alert to outside hazards.

Slip, trip, and fall hazards can be anywhere, and you should be watching for them. Hazards include outside stairs or steps in poor condition or cluttered; ice, snow, or moisture on sidewalks or entryways; uneven or broken concrete walkways; and toys or other objects in your path of travel. If something is in need of repair, discuss it with your employer.

Weather can be unpredictable. If you are going to be outside with your employer, be sure to check the forecast ahead of time. Always carry wet or cold weather clothing, closed-toed shoes with good traction, and an umbrella in your car. Sunburn is easily prevented by applying sunscreen with a protection factor of 30 or higher. And don't forget your sunglasses and a hat.

C.12 Animal safety

Be aware of hazards inside and outside the home and consider household pets and other animals. Sources of injury from animals, especially pets, may include bites, tripping, and allergic reactions.

Bites

Unless it is absolutely necessary or you know the animal well, avoid contact with pets. An animal bite is painful and can cause an infection.

Cats often let you know when they have had enough attention by biting or scratching. Dogs may appear friendly but can also be very protective of their territory and owners. If aggressive action occurs, request that the animal be secured in a safe place prior to your visits.

How to avoid a dog bite:

- Never approach an unfamiliar dog.
- Never run from a dog and scream.
- Stay still when an unfamiliar dog comes up to you.
- If knocked over by a dog, lie still.
- Do not look a dog in the eye.
- Do not disturb a dog that is sleeping, eating, or caring for puppies.
- Do not pet a dog without letting it see and sniff you first.

Tripping hazard

Pets can present a tripping hazard so be aware of the location of animals and their toys at all times. Placing a bell on an animal's collar can help alert you to their location.

Other animals

You may encounter other animals outside of the consumer's home. Remember, any animal can become aggressive if it feels its territory is being infringed upon.

C.13 Driver safety

Wear your seat belt. It's the law in Oregon for a very good reason. Drivers thrown from vehicles are 25 times more likely to die in an accident.

Check your tires for wear and tear. Faulty, under-inflated, or over-inflated tires cause many preventable accidents. Proper selection of tires is important. Be prepared for snow and ice with good traction tires or chains.

Check to make sure that your engine, brakes, steering, shocks, lights, horn, and windshield wipers are working properly.

Slow down. Thirty percent of all fatal accidents involve excessive speed.

Reduce distractions. Pull over to text, make calls, or answer cell phones. Concentrate on driving. Phone conversations, radios, and snacking are distracting and can cause accidents.

Use extreme caution at intersections. Other drivers may not stop at red lights or stop signs.

Don't drive while drowsy. Get plenty of sleep. Pull over and take a short nap if necessary. Remember, caffeine is only a temporary solution, and eventually your body needs sleep.

Make sure your registration and insurance are current. If you provide transportation as part of your assigned task, make sure that your insurance is adequate.

Don't drive while under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. Over half of all fatal car crashes are alcohol-related.

Take a refresher driver's education class. Many insurance companies offer discounts to older (50+) adults who have completed a class.

C.14 Violence in the workplace

Be sensitive to the potential for violent behavior and how to handle such an event.

Examples of violent behavior:

- Verbal attacks
- Threats of physical attack
- Actual physical attacks
- Sexual advances or comments

Warning signs of impending violence could include:

- Invading one's personal space
- Hands in pockets
- Clinching fists
- Pacing
- Yelling
- Profanity
- Confrontations

Be aware of other people in the home and those that come and go. Trust your intuition.

If violent behavior occurs or you see indicators, do the following:

- Remain calm.
- Talk calmly, listen to the person, and keep a safe distance.
- Remind the person that you are there to help.
- Know your escape route.
- If you feel afraid of being harmed, leave the home and call the case manager or local office from a safe place nearby. If you are in immediate danger, call 911. If the employer cannot be left alone due to his/her need for assistance, call 911 and ask for a welfare check on the person. Stay nearby until someone comes or you are instructed as to what to do.

Personal safety outside the employer's home:

- Plan ahead — if your employer's home is in a location not familiar to you, ask for precise driving directions or look it up on a map.
- Carry a noise-making device such as a whistle.
- Carry a cell phone.
- Keep your car in good repair; know whom to call if your car breaks down.
- Always lock your car.
- Don't leave personal items visible in the car.
- Always carry your keys in your hand when you are leaving your employer's home to go to your car.
- Carry an extra set of keys.
- Choose a parking spot that is in the open and near a light if you are there when it is dark.
- Check the outside, the front, and back seat of your car before getting in.

D. Protecting your body at work

D.1 Preventing strains and sprains

Preventing injuries at work by identifying job tasks that could cause an injury that affects muscles, tendons, ligaments — strains and sprains. Work-related strains and sprains occur in all kinds of work-related activities, such as:

- Employer transfer
- Housekeeping or personal care tasks that involve:
  - » Pushing, reaching, pulling
  - » Lifting
  - » Bending

These activities may not present problems in all circumstances, but consider the **duration** (how long) and **frequency** (how often) of your tasks. The more you are exposed to the risk factors (repetitiveness, awkward postures, force, and heavy lifting), the more likely you are to be injured.

Remember: Report the first signs of pain and symptoms of a work-related injury. If ignored and left untreated, mild symptoms can turn into more serious, disabling injuries.

D.2 Risk factors

"**Risk factors**" for strains and sprains are job tasks and body movements that can lead to injury. Think about the parts of a job that can cause pain and injury (risk factors). Solutions can include equipment (see Section D.4), good body mechanics, and work organization. Finding the risk factors in your job is the first step toward preventing back injuries. The more risk factors or things to watch out for that you have in your job, the more likely it is that you will get injured. To have fewer injuries on the job, the number of risky movements must be reduced.

Examples of risk factors for strains and sprains:

- **High repetition** — when a job requires repeated activity with the same set of muscles. Performing the same motion over and over.
- **Excessive force** — when a worker has to continually use a lot of force, whether lifting, pushing, or pulling. For example:
  - » Moving heavy objects to do housekeeping.
  - » Lifting a wheelchair into a car.
  - » Assisting your employer out of bed.
  - » Transferring your employer from a chair to a bed or bath.
- **Awkward posture** — when a job makes a worker hold an uncomfortable position for long periods of time. Some examples include bending, twisting, stooping, reaching, gripping, working overhead, holding fixed positions, changing a bed while the employer is in it, or holding the person in the shower.
- **Fixed posture** — when a worker has to stay in one position for long periods of time such as standing or sitting all day.
- **Direct pressure** — when a worker's body constantly presses against a hard or sharp surface. Sensitive areas to pressure are the sides of fingers, palms, wrists, forearms, elbows, and knees.
- **Extreme temperature** — when a worker has to work in very cold or very hot temperatures.
- **Poor work organization** — when there is not enough time for the body to recover from demanding, hard work. Some examples include fast pace of work, long hours, lack of breaks, limited variety of work tasks, or lots of time pressure or stressful situations.

Reducing or eliminating risk factors can lessen the likelihood of injuries.

D.3 Transfers

There is no "safe" way to manually lift a person, but there are techniques and assistive devices that lessen the risks involved with transfers. (See the next section — Durable Medical Equipment and Assistive Devices). Employers could ask their physicians for suggestions about the best way to transfer. The physician may be able to write a prescription for assistive devices that might be helpful for transferring the employer safely without putting as much strain on the worker. Some assistive devices can be authorized through the employer's medical coverage. The physician may also be able to authorize a physical therapist or occupational therapist to help show the worker the best way to provide transfer assistance.

As a worker, you work alone most of the time, so it is critical that you manually lift patients with a safe lifting technique or assistive device. Talk to the case manager if you have any questions about lifting. Some employers require more than one person for assistance with heavier tasks like bathing and transferring. The case manager may be able to help identify a second person to assist with these tasks. The case manager may also authorize a contract RN to go to your employer's home and provide teaching and consultation on how to transfer.

D.4 Durable medical equipment and assistive devices

Durable medical equipment can help avoid injury on the job and also make getting around easier for your employer. Some of this equipment has been developed to be more portable and to fit in the home. Some examples include:

- **Lifting equipment** — helps a person get in and out of bed, in and out of the bathtub, or walk with the aid of a lift.
- **Shower chairs** can be used to wheel a person over the toilet and into certain kinds of showers.
- **Wheelchairs** with removable armrests and footrests make it easier to transfer.
- **Transfer benches** make an easier transfer in and out of the bath.
- **Gait belts** assist with support by providing better grip and holding as you assist ambulatory patients. Gait belts are inexpensive and a prescription is not required.

Who can get this type of durable medical equipment?

People with Medicare, Medicaid, Veteran's Administration benefits, or private insurance may be able get at least some types of equipment they need, either by renting it or buying it. The process for each kind of insurance or medical benefit is different. Remember, the ability to obtain the equipment through medical insurance should be dependent upon the person's needs for equipment.

Whatever benefits or insurance a person has, the need for the equipment has to be well documented. Both a prescription from the doctor and supporting documents that state the person's need for the equipment is required. The social worker, the doctor, or a physical therapist can prepare the supporting documents. (The employer should keep a copy of all documents.)

If you are concerned about your safety and the need for durable medical equipment, ask your employer to talk to the case manager. There might be home modification options available through Medicaid or the Contract RN may have suggestions.

D.5 Body mechanics for workers

Using the proper body mechanics can help protect your body in every household task from cooking to cleaning to laundry.

Tips for good body mechanics

Neutral posture. Neutral spine posture is a key element of body mechanics. Why? The spine has three (3) curves to make it strong. It is important to KEEP THESE CURVES when moving, bending, and lifting. Loss of curves means the back is less stable and more prone to injury.

Wide base of support. Stand with your feet 8-12" (shoulder width) apart with one foot a half step ahead of the other. You will then be able to move your employer or object by using a weight shift rather than a dead lift.

Bend knees. Bending your knees rather than your back makes your legs do the work instead of your back. Bend at the hips, not at the waist.

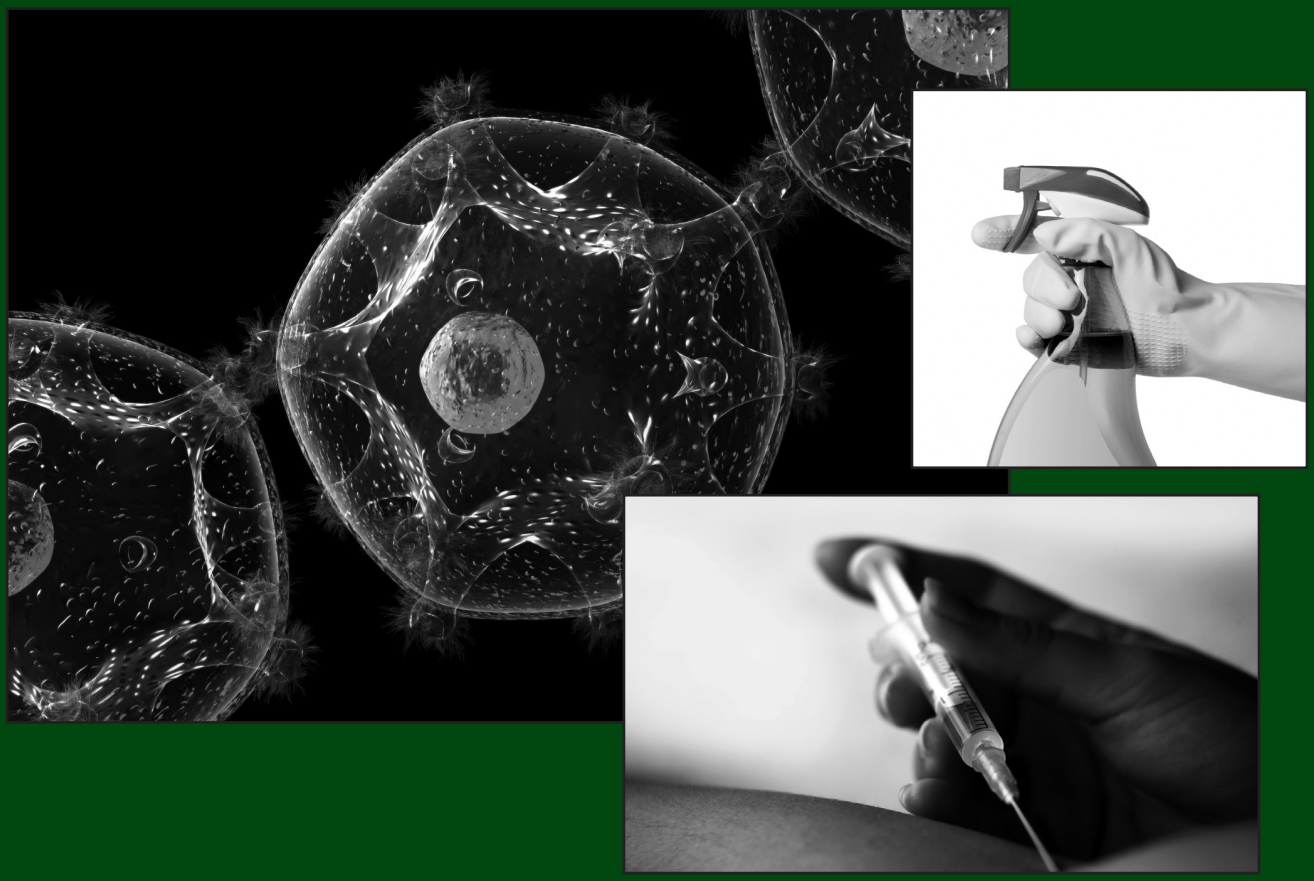
Keep your back straight. Keeping your back straight while maintaining its natural curve minimizes the risk of injury. Muscles that support your back work optimally in this position. Tighten your stomach muscles before lifting an item or moving a person.

Bring weight close to your body. A heavy object that is held close to your body is easier to carry. There is less load on your back and less stress on your back muscles.

Lift with your legs. The muscles of your legs are stronger than your back and should be used for lifting.

Adjust the height of the bed when possible. If your employer is in a hospital bed, raise the bed to the best height so that stress on your back is minimized when assisting with transfers, dressing, toileting, positioning, or range of motion exercises.

To turn, move your feet. If you turn without moving your feet, you are twisting your back. This causes wear and tear on your discs, which can raise the risk of injury. Face your work; don't twist, move your feet instead.



E. Protecting against disease transmission

E.1 Infectious disease

Definition

Infectious diseases are disorders caused by organisms such as bacteria, viruses, fungi, or parasites. Many microorganisms colonize in and on our bodies. They're normally harmless or even helpful, but under certain conditions may cause disease.

Some infectious diseases can be passed from person to person. Some, however, are transmitted via bites from insects or animals. Others are acquired by digesting contaminated food or water or other exposures in the environment.

Signs and symptoms of infectious diseases vary, but often include fever and chills. Mild complaints may respond to home remedies, while some life-threatening infections may require hospitalization and intravenous antibiotics.

Many infectious diseases, such as measles and chickenpox, can be prevented by vaccines. Frequent and thorough hand-washing also helps protect you from infectious diseases.

Symptoms

Each infectious disease has its own specific signs and symptoms. General signs and symptoms common to many infectious diseases include:

- Fever
- Loss of appetite
- Fatigue
- Muscle aches

Causes

Infectious diseases can be caused by:

- **Bacteria.** These one-cell organisms are responsible for illnesses such as strep throat, urinary tract infections, and tuberculosis.
- **Viruses.** Even smaller than bacteria, viruses cause a multitude of diseases ranging from the common cold to AIDS.
- **Fungi.** Many skin diseases, such as ringworm or athlete's foot, are caused by fungi. Other types of fungi can infect your lungs or nervous system.
- **Parasites.** Malaria is caused by a tiny parasite that is transmitted by a mosquito bite. Other parasites may be transmitted to humans from animal feces.

Direct contact

An easy way to catch most infectious diseases is by coming in contact with a person or animal who has one. Three ways infectious diseases can be spread through direct contact are:

- **Person to person.** The most common way for infectious diseases to spread is through the direct transfer of bacteria, viruses, or other germs from one person to another. This can occur when an individual with the bacterium or virus touches, coughs on, or kisses someone who isn't infected. These germs can also spread through the exchange of body fluids from sexual contact or a blood transfusion. The person who passes the germ may have no symptoms of the disease, but may simply be a carrier.
- **Animal to person.** Pets can carry many germs. Being bitten or scratched by an infected animal can make you sick and, in extreme circumstances, can be fatal. Handling animal waste can be hazardous, too. For example, you can acquire a toxoplasmosis infection by scooping your cat's litter box.
- **Mother to unborn child.** A pregnant woman may pass germs that cause infectious diseases to her unborn baby. Some germs can pass through the placenta. Germs in the vagina can be transmitted to the baby during birth.

Indirect contact

Disease-causing organisms also can be passed by indirect contact. Many germs can linger on an inanimate object, such as a tabletop, doorknob, or faucet handle. When you touch a doorknob handled by someone ill with the flu or a cold, for example, you can pick up the germs he or she left behind. If you then touch your eyes, mouth, or nose before washing your hands, you may become infected.

Insect bites

Some germs rely on insect carriers such as mosquitoes, fleas, lice, or ticks to move from host to host. These carriers are known as vectors. Mosquitoes can carry the malaria parasite or West Nile virus, and deer ticks may carry the bacterium that causes Lyme disease.

Food contamination

Another way disease-causing germs can infect you is through contaminated food and water. This mechanism of transmission allows germs to be spread to many people through a single source. E. Coli, for example, is a bacterium present in or on certain foods such as undercooked hamburger or unwashed fruits or vegetables.

E.2 Protecting yourself from disease

Infectious agents can enter your body through:

- Skin contact or injuries
- Inhalation of airborne germs
- Ingestion of contaminated food or water
- Tick or mosquito bites
- Sexual contact

Follow these tips to reduce your risk of infecting yourself or others:

- **Wash your hands.** Hand washing is one of your best defenses against spreading infection, including HBV and HIV. Always wash your hands with non-abrasive soap and water after removing gloves and before putting new gloves on. This is especially important before and after preparing food, before eating, and after using the toilet. workers should wash their hands several times a day and may use many pairs of gloves.

  How to wash your hands:

  » **Turn on warm water.** Keep water running while washing your hands.

- » **Rub palms together to make lather.** Scrub between fingers and entire surface of hands and wrists. Using friction, scrub hands for 15 to 30 seconds.
- » **Rinse hands thoroughly.** Point fingers down so water does not run up your wrists.
- » **Dry hands with a clean towel.** Use a clean paper towel to turn off the faucet. Use hand lotion, if available, to prevent chapping.

- **Get vaccinated**. Immunization can drastically reduce your chances of contacting many diseases. Make sure to keep your recommended vaccinations up-to-date, as well as your childrens.
- **Stay home**. Don't go to work if you are vomiting, have diarrhea, or are running a fever. Don't send your child to school if he/she has these signs and symptoms, either.
- **Prepare food safely**. Keep counters and other kitchen surfaces clean when preparing meals. In addition, promptly refrigerate leftovers—don't let cooked foods remain at room temperature for extended periods of time.
- **Practice safe sex**. Use condoms if you or your partner has a history of sexually transmitted diseases or high-risk behavior.
- **Don't share personal items**. Use your own toothbrush, comb, and razor. Avoid sharing drinking glasses or dining utensils.
- **Travel wisely.** Don't fly when you're ill. With so many people confined to a small area, you may infect other passengers on the plane. And your trip won't be comfortable, either. If you're traveling out of the country, talk to your doctor about any special immunizations that you may need.

E.3 Gloves

Gloves and masks are provided when a worker is performing assistance with activities of daily living, nursing tasks, or other duties that would involve possible contact with bodily fluids. A one month supply is available through the local SPD/AAA office serving your employer. This supply is to be used while waiting for the employer's order to be sent to their home. Consumers who receive their services paid by Medicaid may be able to order gloves and masks under their medical coverage through the Division of Medical Assistance Program (DMAP). If the employer needs assistance in ordering gloves and masks, they should contact their physician or case manager. Once the employer's order is complete, it will be sent directly to their home by the medical supply company.

E.4 Cleaning and sanitizing

To sanitize means to reduce the bacterial count to safe levels. The next level up is to disinfect which means to destroy harmful germs. Depending on the situation, you might need to either sanitize or disinfect, using a chemical like bleach or alcohol. There are three levels of cleaning with bleach. It's important to follow the directions below; too much bleach does not improve the effectiveness of the solution and can be toxic.

Level 1: Sanitize — for general household cleaning.

- For 1-quart water, add 1-teaspoon bleach.
- For 1-gallon water, add 1-1/2 tablespoons bleach.
- For 2-1/2 - 3 gallons water, add 1/4 cup bleach.

Level 2: Disinfect — for cleaning in an environment where someone has an infection.

- For 1-quart water, add 1-tablespoon bleach.
- For 1-gallon water, add 1/4-cup bleach.

Level 3: Cleaning up blood and body fluids.

- For 1-quart water, add 1/2-cup bleach.
- For 1-gallon water, add 2 cups bleach.
- For larger quantities, use 9-parts water and 1-part bleach.

For each level of cleaning, surfaces should be wiped down with a clean cloth or sponge, leaving the face wet. Surface should remain wet for 30 minutes and should be allowed to air-dry.

When using bleach, be very careful. While bleach is an excellent disinfectant, it is also a strong chemical that can irritate your eyes, throat, and burn your skin. Gloves should be worn at all times, and goggles are a good idea to prevent bleach from splashing in your eyes. Good ventilation is necessary; do not use concentrated mixtures in a space with no windows.

Never mix chlorine bleach with any other household or cleaning products. Doing so can result in different types of harmful acids being formed. Poisonous gasses can also be released that will cause very serious breathing problems.

Surfaces must be clean before application of bleach solution. Always clean dirty surfaces with soap and water and rinse with clean water before applying a bleach solution.

Bleach solutions lose effectiveness over time. Fresh solutions should be mixed just prior to use. For disinfecting purposes, fresh bleach should not be purchased if the date on the container is older than three months because the active ingredient (hypochlorite) will dissipate through the plastic container. You can contact customer service at Clorox for more information about bleach (1-800-292-2808 or www.clorox.com).

Bleach and "Ultra-Bleach." Always check out the percentage of hypochlorite on the bottle label. Generally, liquid bleach in a bottle is a 5.25% sodium hypochlorite solution. This means 5.25% of the liquid is the chemical sodium hypochlorite, and the rest is mostly water. If the percentage is higher (such as in "Ultra Bleach"), use more water.

E.5 Universal precautions

The risk of transmission in a homecare setting is greatly reduced if universal precautions are followed each and every time.

Normally your skin acts as a protective barrier to keep viruses out. But even tiny breaks or cracks in the skin from common conditions like dermatitis, hangnails, acne, and chapping and broken cuticles can be doorways for germs to enter your body.

Always make sure you use gloves or some other barrier to protect yourself when handling a person's body fluids or blood. Check gloves before putting them on, and never wear gloves that are damaged or ripped.

Universal precautions mean treating all blood or body fluids as potentially infectious. You can't afford to take any chances since it takes just one exposure to become infected with certain bloodborne diseases. Specific precautions include:

- Use gloves, a gown, and a mask if fluids are airborne. (Tuberculosis is airborne.)
- If you don't have gloves, you can use anything that will come between you and the body fluid — a plastic bag, for example.

Seek medical attention for unprotected contact incidents and contact the workers' compensation coordinator.

Whenever you clean up blood or body fluids:

- Wear disposable gloves to protect your hands. Avoid tearing your gloves on equipment.
- Make sure that blood and body fluids do not get on your work clothes.
- Use disposable towels to soak up most of the blood.
- Turn gloves inside out when removing them.
- Put all contaminated towels and waste in a sealed, color-coded or labeled, leak-proof container.
- Clean up with an appropriate disinfecting solution (ten parts water to one part bleach). After cleaning, promptly disinfect mops and any other cleaning equipment.

E.6 Other exposure hazards

Sometimes you may face hazards that are less obvious while performing routine cleaning or maintenance tasks. These hazards are just as dangerous as an accident situation. Blood, even if you can't see it, can be almost anywhere you have to clean such as toilets, sinks, or trash cans. Wear gloves and protective equipment if you must clean surfaces that may be soiled with body fluids or excretions.

Laundry handling can also be risky. It may conceal contaminated items such as bloody rags and clothing or contaminated sharps. To protect yourself when handling laundry, always carry it by the top. Never place a hand underneath to support it. When sorting laundry, take precautions to protect yourself by wearing gloves.

Sharps. Always, immediately discard used syringes into a sharps container. To avoid an injury, never recap a syringe prior to disposal. Oregon law prohibits syringe/needles and lancets (sharps) from being disposed and collected with regular garbage. There is a $500 per day fine in Oregon if you are caught disposing of sharps improperly. Some pharmacies and medical supply stores provide containers and disposal for a fee. Also, the local garbage company usually provides a safety approved sharps container for this type of medical waste disposal for a small fee. If a sharp container is needed in your work environment, discuss it with your employer or their case manager.

Common sense rules. Be sure to wash your hands and remove any protective clothing that might have been contaminated before:

- Eating
- Drinking
- Smoking
- Applying cosmetics or lip balm
- Handling contact lenses
- Always wash your hands afterward

WORKERS' SAFETY SUPPLY LIST

- **Cleaning gloves** (thicker, multiple-use type) — wear when cleaning, especially when using chemicals (i.e., bleach, ammonia, etc.). Use separate gloves for each home.
- **Disposable gloves** (avoid latex) — wear when handling any items with bodily fluids or waste (saliva, urine, feces, blood, etc.) and dispose of after each usage. These gloves may be available as part of the consumer/employer's medical plan. Contact the case manager for help.
- **Face mask** — wear to protect from airborne illnesses (colds, etc.).
- **Plastic garbage bags** — use when disposing of used bandages, gloves, tissues, etc. It can also be used as a smock if an apron is not available.
- **Sturdy step stool** — use to reach high cupboards or surfaces. Don't use furniture or broken ladders.
- **Bleach** — use to kill HIV and other germs. For body fluid spills, use 1-part bleach, 9-parts water. Don't pre-mix with water more than 24 hours in advance. Bleach is a strong chemical! Store the bleach bottle upright with a tight cap. Don't mix with ammonia or other cleaners; use only the strength needed; have good ventilation when using; and rinse the bottle well before recycling.
- **Paper towels** — use to dry hands, clean up spills.
- **Soap** — to wash hands. Antibacterial soap is not needed.
- **Alcohol hand wipes or gel** — for situations where there is no access to a sink.
- **Sharps disposal container** — used to place sharps in to prevent accidental injury. All residences where sharps are used are required to have a disposal container. If a HCW is disposing of sharps, be sure to wear gloves and protect yourself from injury.
- **Waterproof apron** — wear when there is a danger of body fluids splashing.
- **Goggles** — wear when there is a danger of anything splashing.
- **A change of clothes** in case you get contaminated (put contaminated clothes in bag and close it tightly). Wash clothes when you get home or at your employer's house. After washing, run one cycle with water and one-half cup of bleach before washing anything else.

EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

(Employer and employee should develop this plan and post next to the phone and/or on the refrigerator)

Employer name: _____ Date: _____

1. EMERGENCIES

LIFE THREATENING — CALL 9-1-1 —Tell them the number you are calling from.
Home address: _____
Major crossroad: _____
Home direction from crossroad: _____

2. EMERGENCIES

NON-LIFE THREATENING: List the following local numbers.

Fire/Paramedics: _____ Physician: _____
Hospital: _____ Ambulance: _____
Police/Sheriff: _____ Poison Control: _____
Relative: _____ Neighbor/friend: _____
Case Manager: _____ Other: _____

3. HOME EVACUATION

Make a sketch of the home in this space and show where exits are. Draw arrows to show escape routes. In the event of a fire, get yourself and your employer out.

4. TEMPORARY RELOCATION SITES

List alternative places to go when the home is unsafe.
Name: _____ Phone: _____
Address: _____
Name: _____ Phone: _____
Address: _____

5. SAFETY EQUIPMENT

The fire department may help the employer with installation information.
Fire extinguishers: _____ Smoke alarms: _____

6. OTHER EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT

Identify location of first aid kit, blankets, food and water, flashlights, radio, and other emergency equipment.
Location: _____

SAMPLE SAFETY CHECKLIST

(Conduct this safety assessment with your employer.)

- ☐ Emergency Action Plan in place.
- ☐ Adequate disposal gloves, first aid kit, masks, and bleach.
- ☐ Outside walkways are well lit, cleared of debris/material.
- ☐ Inside floors are cleared of furniture, clutter, cords, hoses, etc.
- ☐ Stairs have handrails and are well lit.
- ☐ Rug edges are not frayed and tacked down.
- ☐ Throw rugs are removed or non-skid mat in place.
- ☐ No exposed or frayed electrical wires or extension cords.
- ☐ Used needles are placed in sharps container.
- ☐ Sharp objects are padded (bed frames, etc.).
- ☐ Bathrooms have non-slip surfaces and sturdy grab bars.
- ☐ Medical equipment properly stored.
- ☐ No smoking or open flames near oxygen bottles, especially when in use.
- ☐ Liquids such as water, ice, snow, and grease are cleaned up immediately.
- ☐ Materials are stored at proper height and safely.
- ☐ Proper lighting.
- ☐ Home is free of bugs, mice, etc., and animal waste.
- ☐ Animals are controlled.
- ☐ Medications and chemicals are labeled and stored correctly.
- ☐ Fire extinguishers are readily available and serviced.
- ☐ Smoke alarms are in working condition.
- ☐ Lifting and moving objects are kept to a minimum.
- ☐ Well-fitting shoes with good tread are worn at all times.
- ☐ Flammable materials are stored properly or thrown out.

OREGON
Home Care
COMMISSION

DHS
Oregon Department
of Human Services