



**Health
Information
and Quality
Authority**

An tÚdarás Um Fhaisnéis
agus Cáilíocht Sláinte

Safety Alert 002/2012

The use of hoists in Designated Centres

1. What is the risk?

While hoists can reduce musculoskeletal risks there are risks associated with moving and positioning people. Incidents involving hoists have resulted in severe injuries to residents.

2. Recent incidents

The Health Information and Quality Authority is aware of a number of significant incidents in relation to the use of hoists which have resulted in residents being seriously injured. Injuries have resulted from incorrect practices, incorrect equipment or residents not being positioned correctly before engaging the hoist.

3. Key responses

As a matter of urgency, providers should take a number of safety precautions in relation to the use of hoists in designated centres, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Assess the risks for each resident who requires the use of a hoist and ensure that control measures related to the specific risks are put in place. Review risk assessments frequently.
- Check the resident's weight in relation to manufacturer's specifications for safe working load of hoist and slings.
- Review the resident's condition prior to each transfer to ensure continued suitability for hoisting and the use of the equipment.
- Ensure that the process is explained to residents and that their privacy and dignity is maintained when using hoists.
- Proceed at a safe pace and observe the resident at all times while using the hoist.
- Select the correct hoist and sling for the resident, taking into account his/her body shape and weight. The resident's care plan should include the hoist and sling type/size to be used.
- Check the hoist before each use. Inspect slings and attachments for wear and tear and ensure the hoists and slings are compatible.
- Ensure the raise/lowering mechanism works and the emergency stop button is set correctly.
- Ensure that the maintenance of equipment is up to date as per manufacturer's guidelines.
- Ensure the environment is suitable and there is sufficient space to safely operate the equipment.
- Ensure the support surface is ready and safe to receive the resident.
- Ensure that all staff are trained on the principles of safe hoisting, the potential risks and how to use each specific piece of hoisting equipment.

4. Relevant standards and regulations

- Article 5 of the Health Act 2007 (Care and Welfare of Residents in Designated Centres for Older People) Regulations 2013 sets out assessment and care planning requirements in designated centres.
- Article 26 of the Health Act 2007 (Care and Welfare of Residents in Designated Centres for Older People) Regulations 2013 sets out the risk management procedures required in designated centres.
- Schedule 6 of the Health Act 2007 (Care and Welfare of Residents in Designated Centres for Older People) Regulations 2013 sets out the requirement that equipment provided for use by residents is maintained in good working order.