

Injury Hotspots Health and Aged Care Services

These are the most common injuries and hazards for people working in health and aged care services. See the safety solutions over the page to learn how you can prevent them in your workplace. The health and aged care sector incorporates hospitals, nursing homes, community health centres, dentists, optometrists and veterinary services.

Psychological system

Work-related stress, anxiety or depression from harassment (either from patients, patient relatives or co-workers), bullying or work pressure

12%

Shoulder

Muscle stress/strain from lifting/assisting patients, lifting/handling heavy objects (e.g. boxes, mattresses) or moving furniture (e.g. beds, trolleys). Traumatic joint/muscle injury or strain from lifting/assisting patients, handling heavy objects or moving furniture

15%

Forearm/wrist

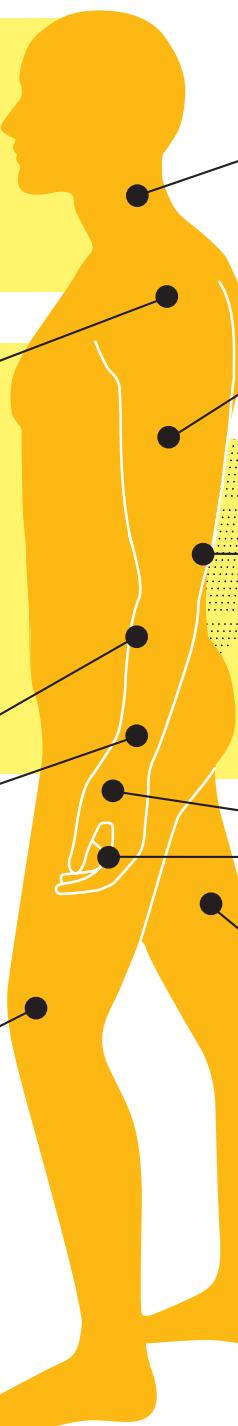
Traumatic joint/muscle injury or strain from lifting/ moving furniture or patients

6%

Knee

Muscle stress/strain from moving/lifting furniture, transporting/assisting patients, falling while cleaning or slipping on wet surfaces. Traumatic joint/muscle injury or strain from moving/lifting furniture, transporting/assisting patients, falling while cleaning or slipping on wet or uneven surfaces

7%



Neck

Muscle stress/strain from assisting/lifting patients or lifting/handling equipment

6%

Arm

Muscle stress/strain from lifting/assisting patients or lifting/handling equipment

32%

Back

Muscle stress/strain from lifting/assisting patients, lifting/handling heavy objects, bending awkwardly or moving furniture

5%

Hand and fingers

Open wounds and lacerations from being bitten by cat/dog or cutting/crushing hand or fingers. Muscle stress/strain from lifting and repetitive movements

3%

Leg

Traumatic joint/muscle injury and fractures from slipping on wet floors or uneven ground, or falling down stairs

Safety solutions

WorkSafe expects health and aged care providers to have safety solutions in place to protect workers from the most common causes of injury. Below are some common solutions known to reduce the risk of injury; employers should work together with their employees and HSRs to determine the most effective OHS solutions for their workplace.

Hotspots	Solutions
Lifting and assisting clients	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Shoulder ● Back ● Neck ● Arm ● Forearm/wrist ● Knee ● Hand and fingers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use mechanical handling aids (e.g. overhead tracking, hoists, mobile hoists, wheeled equipment, slide sheets) at all times unless clients can lift themselves. • Ensure staff are trained in all methods of lifting used in the workplace. • When moving equipment (e.g. orthopaedic sets), use a trolley or lifting aid to reduce the risk of sprains and strains.
Pushing and pulling trolleys and wheelchairs	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Shoulder ● Back ● Neck ● Arm ● Forearm/wrist ● Knee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide equipment that is fit for the purpose and maintained in accordance with manufacturer's specifications. • Ensure building layout/design limits the need to push or pull equipment (e.g. good path design, suitable floor surfaces).
Occupational violence	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Psychological system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement policies and procedures to reduce the risk of occupational violence from customers, clients and others. Ensure they are well communicated and are followed by all workers. • Methods may include warning and duress systems, training, supervision and staff support. • Ensure buildings and equipment are designed to minimise risk (e.g. toughened glass, no blind spots, access/egress control, barriers).
Bullying, harassment and stress	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Psychological system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote clear policies and procedures that address bullying, harassment and work pressure, and enforce an effective issue reporting and resolution plan. • Ensure all workers understand what bullying and harassment are, and the procedures for reporting incidents (e.g. explain policies and procedures during the induction process). • Provide post-incident care, including counselling and support.
Slips and trips	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Knee ● Leg 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good housekeeping should be a central priority to the system of work to eliminate all slipping/tripping hazards (e.g. remove liquid, dust or other contaminants on floors). • Ensure that all floors are level throughout work areas and there are no temporary or permanent obstructions posing any risks.

You must consult with the people who will be affected by changes before any changes affecting their occupational safety or health are put in place. If someone is injured at work, their employer must ensure they receive proper care and support their safe return to work.

Your health and safety contact is:

Visit: worksafe.vic.gov.au/hotspots

WorkSafe Advisory Service
Toll-free 1800 136 089

WorkSafe Victoria is a trading name of the Victorian WorkCover Authority