

Home Health Care Hazards

Home health care is administered in an unfamiliar setting, which means your safety plan needs to be flexible to protect workers from getting hurt on the job.

Ergonomic injuries

One of the biggest concerns in home health care is an ergonomic injury. Workers can hurt themselves while moving, bathing, and even dressing a patient. This is especially true when the patient may be overweight, unresponsive, or combative. When moving a patient, make sure you're using the proper equipment. Make sure that you keep the patient close to your body to reduce strain, and that you keep a straight back and use your legs to lift.

Infection control

When it comes to preventing the spread of infections, it's important to do so for both the patient and your own safety. Simply wearing gloves and washing your hands frequently can reduce the spread of germs. Treat all bodily fluids as if they may be contaminated. If the patient may have an airborne sickness, be sure to use proper respiratory protection.

Slips, trips, and falls

Keeping a clean house can prevent slips, trips, and falls. Dangerous conditions like torn carpeting, changes in flooring, poor lighting, narrow stairs or a wet floor can cause you to slip and be hurt. While visiting a client's home, be sure to watch out for anything that could cause a safety concern. That includes outside where broken sidewalks, weather conditions, or a pothole could also cause an injury. It's important to make sure that there are working smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, and other safety items in the home as well.

Be aware of animals

Family pets can be aggressive towards strangers in their home. In addition to bites and scratches, they could also be a tripping hazard if they get in your way. To be safe, if it's possible, you should require that animals are confined to another room while you're treating the patient.

Look out for needles

When working outside of a controlled environment, needle sticks can happen more often as patients and family members may leave needles exposed. You may want to consider using needle-less devices and other safety features. Be sure that you never re-cap a needle, break it or try to compact garbage that may contain needles.

Get training

When visiting patients in their home environment, it's important to keep your own personal safety in mind. Get training to handle combative patients. Also, be sure to communicate with your employer so they know where you are at all times. It's also good to keep your cell phone handy and programmed with emergency numbers. If you ever feel uncomfortable or unsafe in a home, leave immediately.

For more information and additional risk management and prevention tools, visit: fwcruminsurance.com