



MAKE THE WORKPLACE SAFER Nurses Providing Home Health Care



Three Steps to a Safer Workplace

Active observation and follow-up will go a long way toward making your workplace safer. Follow these three steps:

- 1. Identify hazards or “what can hurt you at work.”** Walk through areas to look for things that can hurt employees, and monitor whether known hazards have been fixed. If you answer “no” to any of the questions below, follow-up is needed.
- 2. Propose solutions.** Assess what changes you can make on your own, and what you need to partner on.
- 3. Take action to make sure the problem is resolved.** Use the *Make the Workplace Safer* Tracking Chart at the end of this document.

Step 1: Identify Hazards

NAME	LOCATION	DATE			
Hazard	Yes	No	Comments/Solution Needed		
INFECTIOUS DISEASES					
1	Are used needles and other sharp objects always disposed of in a sharps container? Is there a site where workers can drop off used sharps containers and pick up a new one?				
2	Do workers avoid recapping needles or removing needles from syringes by hand?				
3	Do workers wear latex-safe gloves when they anticipate contact with blood, mucous membranes, Other Potentially Infectious Materials (OPIM), non-intact skin, or when handling contaminated items or surfaces?				
4	Are gowns, masks and other protective gear available if needed?				
5	Do workers wear a respirator when in the presence of a patient who has tuberculosis (TB) or is suspected of having TB?				
6	Are hand-washing facilities conveniently accessible?				

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Hazard	Yes	No	Comments/Solution Needed
INFECTIOUS DISEASES			
7	If someone is stuck by a used needle, does that person have access to counseling, vaccination and testing?		
8	Are all workers offered the Hepatitis B vaccination at no cost?		
9	Are annual TB tests given to workers at no cost?		
SAFE PATIENT HANDLING			
10	Are safe patient handling instructions prepared for each patient, based on an assessment of the mobility needs of that patient?		
11	Are slides or transfer boards available and used to help move patients?		
12	Are gait belts (buckled around the patient's waist) used to provide a handhold of a patient during mobilization?		
13	When greater aid is needed, do workers have access to proper equipment and additional staff?		
OTHER ERGONOMICS			
14	Are workers able to work without stooping to the floor, twisting, reaching overhead or bending to the side? Is there enough space to work so that workers do not have to put their bodies in an awkward position?		
15	Do workers avoid lifting bulky or heavy materials or equipment?		
SAFE CLEARANCE AND WALKING SURFACES			
16	Are walkways outside patients' homes clear and unobstructed?		
17	Are stairways and other areas workers need to access inside patients' homes clear and unobstructed?		

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Hazard	Yes	No	Comments/Solution Needed
SAFE CLEARANCE AND WALKING SURFACES			
18			Is there adequate lighting inside patients' homes to work safely?
19			Are phone and electric cords secured to prevent tripping hazards?
20			Do workers wear supportive shoes with nonslip soles?
DRIVING			
21			Do workers always wear seatbelts when driving?
22			Do workers plan their route to patients' homes in advance?
23			Are visits scheduled so that workers do not have to rush to the next appointment?
24			Do workers avoid using phones or other devices while driving?
VIOLENCE PREVENTION			
25			Do workers know how to respond to a potentially violent person or situation?
26			Is exterior lighting at night outside patients' homes adequate?
27			If driving, are workers able to park in well-lit, public areas?
28			Do workers have a cell phone and/or device with a panic button when visiting patients' homes?
29			Before a home visit, is there confirmation that either the patient has no weapons at home or that weapons are disabled and secured before the visit?

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Hazard	Yes	No	Comments/Solution Needed
VIOLENCE PREVENTION			
30	Before a home visit, do workers check the patient record for a past history of violence or a threat of violence? If there is a history of violence, do workers take another staff person with them or take other precautions?		
31	Do workers check the patient record for hostile animals? Are animals restrained before a worker visit?		
OTHER			
32	Do workers have what they need to work safely with the chemicals and equipment they use?		
33	Are there any new hazards or other hazards that have not been addressed??		If so, please describe below:

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WORKER KNOWLEDGE

Employees should receive health and safety training and orientation when they start employment, whenever a new hazard is identified, and periodically as a refresher on some topics. Examples of knowledge people should have are listed below. **Do workers in the department know:**

Hazard	Yes	No	Comments/Solution Needed
1 The hazards common to your work, what protective measures are in place, and what safety practices to follow?			
2 How to communicate with patients about ways to make things safer for both the patient and yourself?			
3 The hazards of potentially infectious materials (contact or airborne) and the proper precautions to use?			
4 Safe patient handling methods, such as how to use equipment to position or move patients safely?			
5 How to adjust your work area and equipment, and how to move and position your body to avoid ergonomic injuries?			
6 How to recognize and address potentially violent people or situations?			
7 The hazards of chemicals you work with and how to work with them safely?			
8 How to obtain and use a Safety Data Sheet (SDS) for chemicals you work with?			
9 How to choose, wear, remove and dispose of protective clothing and equipment?			
10 How to safely store, lift and move materials?			
11 What to do in case of a chemical exposure or leak?			
12 What to do in case of an emergency at work?			
13 How to identify safety concerns and whom to report them to?			
14 Any other information or training needed?			If yes, please describe.



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FOLLOW-UP & TRACKING CHART



Propose Solutions

For any “no” answers, think about solutions or ways to address the problem.

- First, think about ways to remove the hazard. This makes your workplace safer and ensures all workers are protected.
- If that’s not possible, think about any policies, procedures or personal protective equipment that is necessary.
- Think about what changes you can make on your own and what changes you need to partner with others (such as other workers, supervisors, facility management) to do.

Write your suggestions for solutions on the “Step 1: Identify Hazards” checklist and on the tracking chart on the next page.

Take Action

Report any safety hazards you identify. Use the following chart to track and make sure the problems are resolved.

1. Give a copy of your hazard checklist findings to your supervisor or department manager, your UBT labor co-lead, and your Safety Team representative.
2. Decide who else should receive a copy of your findings, such as members of the UBT or Safety Committee or your shop steward. Make a note of who you gave it to and the date.
3. Follow up after a few weeks. If the problem was not addressed or resolved, think about your next steps.
 - + Who should be informed?
 - + Who can help you advocate for the needed solution?

MAKE THE WORKPLACE SAFER **FOLLOW-UP AND TRACKING CHART**

NAME		LOCATION		DATE
Safety/Health Problem	What solution is needed?	Date reported and to whom	1 month follow-up	Next Steps
			Corrected Is being addressed Not being addressed Don't know/Other:	
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