

Patient Safety Alert

File Number: 16/17-02 June 6, 2016

POWERED MOBILITY DEVICES

Safe operation of powered mobility devices (PMDs) is important to protect residents from injury. A resident requires a certain level of physical and cognitive functioning to operate a PMD safely. Health regions are responsible for the monitoring of the resident's functioning and reserve the right to revoke these privileges should a resident's abilities decline.

Recommendations

The Ministry of Health recommends:

Regional Health Authorities ensure that a policy and/or guideline regarding Powered Mobility Devices (PMDs) is in place and disseminated to staff where PMDs are used by residents.

The policies/guideline should:

- Increase awareness of risks involved with the use of PMDs;
- Minimize potential risks to residents, staff and the facility;
- Provide knowledge to residents and family members; and
- Provide guidance for the safe use and operation of PMDs and management of safety concerns.

Attachments: Sample policies from Sun Country and Regina Qu'Appelle Health Regions (four Supporting Documents).

Background of Critical Incident

A long-term care (LTC) facility resident left the facility via a PMD without signing out. The resident was seen crossing the highway to go to a local restaurant. An off-duty staff member recognized the resident and notified the LTC home to say that the resident had been in a collision with a semi-trailer. The resident's family member was called and confirmed that the resident had been in a collision and that the resident had sustained a head injury of undetermined severity and a leg injury. The resident was air-lifted to a tertiary care center. The resident later died in hospital.

Incidental Findings

The health region where this incident occurred has a policy in place regarding Powered Mobility Devices (PMDs). However, the facility staff were not aware of the policy until after the collision. The policy references basic information from SGI's *Saskatchewan Driver's Handbook*, a publication that includes recommended safe practices when using a PMD. The handbook, with specific reference to wheelchairs and medical scooters in section 3.23, can be found at this link:

<https://www.sgi.sk.ca/individuals/licensing/studyguides/drivershandbook/roadrules/index.html>

Upon admission to the care home, there was no consent form signed or acknowledgment by the resident/family regarding the region's policy related to PMDs.

Alerts may be issued by the Ministry of Health following the review of at least one critical incident reported to the Ministry. The intent of an alert is to recommend actions that will improve the safety of patients who may be cared for under similar circumstances.

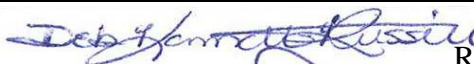

A critical incident is defined as a serious adverse health event including, but not limited to, the actual or potential loss of life, limb or function related to a health service provided by, or a program operated by, a regional health authority (RHA) or health care organization (HCO).

Recommendations are intended to support the development of best practices and to act as a framework for modification so that the end result is a good fit within your RHA and HCO. When possible, RHA policies or initiatives that have been developed will be shared, to encourage adoption of similar policies or actions.

Alerts issued after April 2016 are posted online. Visit www.saskatchewan.ca and search for "critical incidents" or "patient safety alerts".



SUN COUNTRY HEALTH REGION & AFFILIATES

| | | |
|---------------------------|---|--|
| | Policy & Procedure # | IPC-45-10-45 |
| Section: | IPC: Integrated and Primary Care | Page: 1 of: 3 |
| Sub-section: | IPC-45: Long Term Care Services | |
| Category: | IPC-45-10: Client Care | |
| Subject: | Use of Power Mobility Devices | |
| Issued: | April 2010 | |
| Evaluated/Revised: | September 2014 | |
| Initiated By: |  | Deb Kennett-Russill, Regional Manager Therapies LTC/CQI |
| Authorized By: |  | Murray Goeres, Vice President Health Facilities |

POLICY:

Sun Country Health Region allows the use of Power Mobility Devices (PMD) for residents within their facilities and recognizes the risks associated with their use.

PURPOSE:

This policy has been developed to:

- Increase the awareness of risks involved with the use of PMDs.
- Minimize the risk to residents, staff and the facility.
- Provide guidelines for the safe use, operation, and management of safety concerns.

PROCEDURE:

1. The use of a PMD is to be noted on the LTC assessment/screening of potential LTC residents. When a bed is offered, the facility manager determines if they have the ability to accept a resident who uses a PMD.
2. This policy is to be clearly communicated to residents on admission to the facility and the consent form [NUR-LTC-013](#): Use of Motorized Scooter/Powered Wheelchair is signed on admission.
3. LTC staff familiarizes themselves with the LTC Power Mobility Information which includes rules of the road and the resident demonstrates his/her ability to safely operate the PMD within the LTC facility environment.
4. The facility has the right to suspend or remove the PMD if the safety of the operator or other residents and staff are jeopardized. Patient Safety reports [QA-001](#) are completed according to protocol.

POWER MOBILITY DEVICE (PMD) GUIDELINES:

Ability to accommodate a PMD:

- Facilities determine if the residential environment is compatible to use of PMDs. The size of residents' rooms, dining room and common areas, and width of hallways, and doorways and the type of device (chair vs. scooter) are to be considered. The PMD is to be able to be housed and charged within the resident's room.
- Based on assessment, the facility manager evaluates their ability to accommodate PMDs and the environmental modifications that may be required. Some facilities may need to set a limit on the number of PMDs that can be accommodated within the facility.
- The Screening and Referral Committees (SRC) are to be made aware of the facilities that are unable to accommodate PMDs or special circumstances in which they are able to accommodate PMDs.

Safe operation:

- "Rules of the road"/ LTC Power Mobility Information [NUR-LTC-037](#) is reviewed with the resident upon admission to the facility. The form, [NUR-LTC-013](#), acknowledges the right of the facility to revoke privileges if necessary.
- PMD users need sufficient cognitive and physical functioning in order to operate a PMD.
- Assessments are done informally by facility staff through observation or if necessary, a formal assessment by an Occupational Therapist may be requested.
- Persons operating PMDs are to demonstrate their competence in handling the device and in following facility "rules of the road".
- Residents who show evidence of driving difficulties may be able to drive with restrictions (time, place, with supervision/accompanied) or use of the PMD may need to be discontinued.
- Assessment and monitoring of safe driving is a continuous process. A resident may become incapable of driving because of deterioration of motor or cognitive skills, driving while impaired or having dangerous or malicious behaviors.
- After an incident or accident or whenever there is a significant change in health status, an assessment should be done by the RN/LPN or Facility Manager. The results of all assessments and recommendations are documented on the resident's record.
- Residents who leave the facility must sign out.

Maintenance:

- Resident and family are responsible that the Power Mobility Device is in good repair and safe operating condition.

| | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|-------|
| SUN COUNTRY HEALTH REGION & AFFILIATES - POLICY/PROCEDURE | TOPIC: Use of Power Mobility Devices | POLICY & PROCEDURE NO.: IPC-45-10-45 | |
| | | PAGE: 2 | OF: 3 |

- PMD users are expected to know how to upkeep and maintain the device. The PMD is to be regularly maintained and is the responsibility of the resident and family for major repairs and battery replacements.
- The facility may assist in diagnosing problems, making minor adjustments or assisting in contacting the vendor of choice. Power chairs are to have free gel batteries; lead acid batteries are not permitted.
- The facility identifies safe and secure areas for parking, storage and charging PMDs.

Handling safety concerns:

- If a resident endangers the safety of others or him/herself or if property is damaged, the situation is assessed and reasonable course of action determined. The following factors are taken into consideration:

- ✓ The nature of the event
- ✓ The cause of the event.

If the incident is due to PMD malfunction or sustains damage, the PMD undergoes a mechanical inspection and serviced if required by the chosen Medical Equipment Vendor. The resident is provided with a manual wheelchair in the interim.

- If the rules of the facility are being disregarded by the PMD user, to provide a safe environment, the facility may limit or revoke privileges if deemed necessary. The removal of a PMD is considered only after other interventions have been tried and failed. Reasonable interventions after an incident may include:

- ✓ Device programming and modifications to the seating or access method
- ✓ Driver training/education
- ✓ Modification of the resident's room to improve accessibility
- ✓ Education of staff and other residents about safety in a PMD environment
- ✓ Restricting the level of independent mobility. (supervision)

If these strategies are unsuccessful and the resident is unable to safely and responsibly operate the device, the facility may impose a suspension of its use or remove indefinitely.

- If the facility sustains damages on account of PMD use, the facility may assess a fee from the resident responsible for the damages.

Resources;

“Managing Power Mobility Device Risks” (Marsh Canada, SCHR insurer)

| | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|-------|
| SUN COUNTRY HEALTH REGION & AFFILIATES - POLICY/PROCEDURE | TOPIC: Use of Power Mobility Devices | POLICY & PROCEDURE NO.: IPC-45-10-45 | |
| | | PAGE: 3 | OF: 3 |



SUN COUNTRY HEALTH REGION & AFFILIATES

Use of Motorized Scooter/ Powered Wheelchair

Client Name: _____
Address: _____
DOB: ____/____/____ HSN# : _____

I, _____, a resident/client/patient
of _____
(facility)

wish the freedom to [] use my PMD within the facility
[] leave the premises at will

on my [] motorized scooter
[] powered wheelchair

I acknowledge that I have been informed of the SCHR Policy "Use of Power Mobility Devices" and have received and reviewed the LTC Power Mobility Informational Handout NUR-LTC-037, and hereby release the facility and/or Sun Country Health Region from responsibility for ill effects that may result from such action. I may be responsible for any damages to the building caused by my chair.

Should such actions be deemed unsafe to the resident/patient/client or other residents/patient/clients, the facility reserves the right to revoke such privileges." (privileges refers to "use" of the motorized equipment).

Signed at _____, in the Province of Saskatchewan, dated at _____ hrs,
this _____ day of _____, 20 ____.

(Printed Name)

(Printed Name)

(Signature of Client/Patient/Resident)

(Signature of Witness)



Sun Country Health Region acknowledges the importance of maintaining independent mobility and the value of Powered Mobility Devices (PMDs).

Safe operation of PMDs is very important to protect our residents, family and staff from injury. PMDs require a certain level of physical and cognitive functioning to operate them safely.

SCHR reserves the right to revoke these privileges if a resident's abilities decline.

For further information please refer to SCHR Policy "Use of Power Mobility Devices – [IPC 45-10](#)"

Think safe! Obey rules for pedestrians

As stated in the Saskatchewan Driver's Handbook, "The rules of the road that apply to pedestrians also apply to persons using a wheel chair, motorized wheelchair or medical scooter for medical reasons." Therefore, when you are operating your scooter, you must obey all rules for pedestrians such as:

- Using Sidewalks whenever possible. If there are no sidewalks or if the sidewalks do not have scooter accessible curb cuts,
- Cross at pedestrian crosswalks.
- Check for traffic before crossing.
- If there is no crosswalk available, stop, look both ways, and proceed only when all approaching vehicles have come to a full stop.
- Make "eye contact" with motorists or pedestrians before crossing their path to confirm their intention to stop.
- Obey all traffic control signs and devices.

Be a courteous pedestrian

- Slow down when traveling with other pedestrians. Ensure that you do not follow too closely to others or prevent them from passing you when sharing the sidewalk or hallway
- Stay to the right in hallways or on sidewalks. Ask people to let you by and avoid using your horn unless necessary.
- Do not block, hallways, sidewalks and paths. Pull to the side when visiting with friends to allow others to pass.
- When travelling in front of stores, be careful that you do not collide with people leaving these buildings



Be visible

As scooters are smaller than other vehicles on the road, use the following devices to ensure motorists are aware of you:

- reflective strips on sides, front and back of scooter
- a light on the front of scooter
- a fluorescent orange bike flag attached to the rear of the scooter,
- wear bright colored clothing.
- a fluorescent orange bike flag attached to the rear of the scooter
- a light on the back of the scooter

Safe maneuvering of curbs

Take curbs, driveways and ramps “head on.” Always drive on the most level area of the curb, even if it means moving outside of the crosswalk lines. If you drive sideways on a curb, you could tip over.

Learn to use your scooter

It is essential that you know how to operate your scooter properly before venturing out into the public. When you first purchase your scooter, find a quiet parking lot and practice there. Once you feel comfortable that you can safely operate your scooter, find a friend who will travel with you, either on foot or scooter, for your first few trips.

In addition, make sure you read the manual and any other safety information that may be supplied with your scooter.

Know your area!!

Get familiar with the most navigable routes in your neighborhood. Be aware of the locations of curbs that do not have curb cuts or streets that do not have sidewalks so you can avoid these routes if possible by planning ahead.

Allow yourself plenty of time as you may need to take an alternative route if unforeseeable circumstances arise, such as construction. You may need to cross the street, take another route, or even back track.

Prepare for unexpected circumstances

Carry a cellular phone or enough change to make a phone call from a pay phone. Carry phone numbers in case you encounter unexpected circumstances and need assistance. You may want to tape emergency phone numbers onto your scooter.

In an emergency situation, attract attention of a passerby and ask them to phone for help. In Saskatchewan, you can call “911” for emergency assistance.



Long Term Care Powered Mobility Device Information

Extended Care/Veterans Program
Collaborative Power Mobility Agreement

The Extended Care/Veterans Program (EC/VAC) recognizes and supports every resident's goal to enhance his/her independent mobility through the use of power mobility. Power mobility allows an individual with disabilities to move around both at home and in the community. EC/VAC also recognizes the provision of a safe communal environment for all residents, staff and visitors.

The Saskatchewan Abilities Council (SAC) and third party payers who provide funding for power mobility entrust that the program promotes safe and responsible use of this equipment. Unsafe usage places undue risk and potential harm to others, jeopardizing the continuation of this program.

In recognition of the above, guidelines have been developed by the EC/VAC utilizing information acquired from other facilities with similar policies, procedures and protocols for power mobility usage.

The needs of others:

- **EC/VAC provides care for a wide range of residents with different care needs, skills and abilities. A power mobility user's wishes must be balanced with the rights of others to be safe.**

Guidelines on the Use of Power Mobility

What is Safe and Responsible Driving?

Safe and responsible driving is defined as power mobility use that does not harm people or property. Examples of safe driving include, but are not limited to:

- Yielding right of way to others
- Obeying traffic laws outside the facility
- Obeying the law by not using power mobility when impaired by alcohol and/or drugs
- Navigate or cope with a variety of terrains and adjust appropriately to environmental changes (e.g. inside, outside, slopes, grass, snow, ice)

Reasonable risk taking recognizes that some accidents will occur. Examples of reasonable risks include:

- Occasional bumping into elevator doors when entering and exiting
- Turning and bumping wheelchair footplates into walls

Shared Responsibility

EC/VAC recognizes that the best resident care comes as a result of joint problem solving; residents, staff and family working together. Being aware of this partnership approach, our shared responsibilities are:

1. Resident Responsibilities for Safe Driving:
 - To drive the power mobility device safely and responsibly
 - To drive the power mobility device independently
 - To drive the power mobility device in line with any restrictions agreed jointly between the resident and the Occupational Therapist (OT) (e.g. within speed limits, defined hours, within the laws of driving under the influence)
 - To report any problems with the power mobility device to the OT as soon as they occur so any necessary repairs can be completed
 - To refrain from driving the power mobility device until all necessary repairs are completed
 - To minimize risks of injury to self and others by driving the power mobility device defensively and safely
 - To minimize damage to property while driving the device.

2. Occupational Therapy is responsible for Supporting Safe Driving by:
 - Supporting resident desires for mobility and recognizing the need to limit personal injury, injury to others and property damage to the facility and/or equipment.
 - Assess or reassess residents need for power mobility and to determine which power mobility will best match his/her skills and functional capability
 - To provide power mobility training, based upon the results of the resident's driving assessment. Family and nursing staff will also be requested to participate in supporting the resident's driver training.
 - To arrange for repair of power mobility devices through Wascana Rehabilitation Centre, SAC or local vendors.

Families, nursing staff and other team members will also be responsible for monitoring the resident driving skills and continued ability to drive safely. **Unsafe driving should be reported** to the nursing supervisor or manager and OT for further investigation and action.

A reassessment will be arranged if the resident is unable to drive safely. The OT will be responsible for storing the power device during the reassessment process.

What are Power Mobility Assessments?

Functional Assessments are used to determine:

- A resident's physical and cognitive-perceptual skills
- Type of power mobility device as appropriate to the resident's physical needs
- Specialized seating adaptations to optimize driving efficiency

Driving Assessments are used to determine:

- The resident's driving skills in his/her living environment (e.g. indoors and outdoors)
- The need for conditions for safe driving (e.g. reduced speed, environmental obstacles)
- How much training the resident needs in order to drive safely and responsibly
- If the resident meets the criteria for a power mobility device

A **reassessment** of driving skills will be initiated when there is:

- A change in the resident's health status
- An injury to the power mobility user, other resident(s) or caregiver(s)
- Damage to facility property
- Damage to the power mobility device
- A pattern of repeated incidents that is cause for concern
- Use of the power mobility device when resident is under the influence of non-prescription drugs and/or alcohol
- Frequency of reassessments may be annually and/or as required with any of the above concerns observed and reported
- Unsafe driving will result in removal and discontinued usage of the power mobility device

Please refer to Appendix B for Power Mobility Assessment Flowchart

What is Power Mobility Training?

Power mobility training is a demonstration of driving skills by the resident in the actual home environment, inside and/or outside the living space. Areas may include but are not limited to:

- bedroom,
- hallways,
- intersections,
- doorways,
- elevators,
- stopping and slowing down when close to tables
- curbs

In conclusion, the specific length of training and training content/strategies utilized by the OT for a resident is based upon the outcomes of the driving assessment conducted.

A selected driving checklist will be used by the OT to monitor and record the resident's initial and ongoing performance in driving safely. This record will assist the OT to determine the need to change, adjust or cancel the training period and strategies.

EC/VAC will share resident's personal driving information within the circle of care and document in the resident's care plan. A signed copy of the Power Mobility Agreement (Appendix A) will be maintained on the resident's chart.

APPENDIX B**Power Mobility Agreement**

_____ **(Name of Resident)** _____, after completion of required assessment and training on the use of _____ power mobility device, is now able to drive:

➤ Without condition/restrictions

➤ With the following conditions

Our Shared Commitment

Our signatures on this document show our shared commitment and responsibility to maximize your personal independence through power mobility as well as adhere to the principles of safe and responsible driving.

This agreement signifies my commitment to drive my power mobility device safely to ensure the wellbeing of myself, residents, staff and visitors.

I acknowledge and agree to the removal of my power mobility device if found to be unable and/or willing to continue to drive safely.

Name of Resident (please print)

Name of Occupational Therapist

Signature of Resident/Substitute Decision Maker

Signature of Occupational Therapist

Date