ST. FRANCIS 24/7 CALL CENTER: (321) 269-4240

St. Francis REFLECTIONS® Hospice
Established 1977 • Licensed 1990

Safe Transfers: Limited Mobility

Falls in hospice care are common and can occur due to various factors related to the patients declining condition. Safe transfer techniques can ensure safe and effective transfers that minimize the risk of injury to both the caregiver and the patient, depending on the patient's mobility level. **Limited mobility includes patients that can bear some weight but need more assistance.**

General Tips for Safe Transfers:

- **Clear the Environment:** Remove any obstacles such as rugs, furniture, or cords in the path of the transfer.
- **Use Proper Equipment:** Ensure that all equipment (e.g., transfer belt, sliding board, and mechanical lift) is in good working order and correctly positioned.
- **Communication is Key:** Always explain each step to the patient before starting, even if they cannot respond verbally.
- **Patience:** Take your time—never rush through a transfer.
- **Caregiver Safety:**
  - **Use a Wide Stance:** Keep your feet shoulder-width apart and one foot slightly in front of the other for stability.
  - **Bend at the Knees, Not the Back:** Always lift with your legs, not your back, to prevent strain or injury.
  - **Avoid Twisting:** Move your entire body when shifting or pivoting the patient, rather than twisting your torso.

Equipment:

- **Transfer belt (gait belt):** Transfer belt that helps the caregiver hold and guide the patient safely during transfers.
- **Sliding board (optional):** A smooth board used to help the patient slide between surfaces when they cannot stand or have difficulty moving independently.
- **Wheelchair with brakes**

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During Transfer:

- **Check for Pain or Discomfort:** Ask if the patient feels any pain or discomfort during the transfer.
- **Monitor Breathing and Fatigue:** Ensure the patient is not overly exerted. Rest between movements if needed.

Step-by-Step Process:

1) **Preparation:** Ensure the bed is locked and positioned close to the other surface (i.e. bed, chair, etc.), ideally at a slight angle (45 degrees).

2) **Position the Patient:** Ensure the patient is sitting at the edge of the bed/chair with feet flat on the floor with their body leaning slightly forward. Stand in front of the patient or to one side. Stand in a wide, balanced stance to stay stable.

3) **Apply the Transfer Belt and Sliding Board (if needed):** Secure the belt around the patient's waist. Ensure it is snug but comfortable. Hold the belt from the back and sides, avoid pulling up, and instead guide the patient with a steady grip.
***Sliding board: Lift one leg slightly and slide the board under the patient's thigh. Position the other end of the board on the chair or bed.**

4) **Guide the Transfer:** Instruct the patient to place their hands on your forearms or the arms of the chair. On a count of three, help them stand or partially lift, then pivot or gently slide them across the board to the destination.

5) **Help the Patient Sit:** Slowly lower the patient into the chair, bed or wheelchair by bending your knees and keeping your back straight. Support your grip on the transfer belt and using your legs to help control the movement. Once seated, ensure proper position, remove the transfer belt and sliding board.

Emergency Considerations:

- **In case of a Fall:** If a fall occurs during a transfer, call SFR for guidance and assistance.
- **In case of Pain or Discomfort:** Stop the transfer and reassess the situation if the patient experiences pain or discomfort.

Lift Assist: (321) 633-1737

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St. Francis Reflections is always available to assist with any questions or concerns 24/7

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