Guidelines and Criteria for Leaving or Removing Slings in Bed or Wheelchair

LEAVING A SLING - Only universal or hammock slings will be considered

A sling will remain behind a resident/ patient while in a chair if:
- The sling is a hammock sling
- The sling is a universal sling and requires frequent removal
- The sling is a universal sling and is difficult to remove

A sling will remain behind a resident/ patient while in a chair if the Patient / Resident has:
- To be moved continuously throughout the day
- Increased extensor tone / stiffness
- A tendency towards aggression/agitation
- An inability to bend forward
- Significantly decreased hip flexion

THE CARE PROVIDER WILL:
- Make every effort to ensure the dignity of the resident/ patient when the sling is left behind
- Tuck and conceal the straps of the sling in such a way to ensure this does not cause skin integrity problems/ difficulties
- Monitor skin integrity regularly for skin break down

BENEFITS
- Less skin irritation by inserting and removing the sling
- Ability for quicker transfers in rush situations
- Increased comfort by reducing the need to manually handle the patient
- Supports VIHA’s No Lift Policy (attached)
- Supports Safe Work Procedures (attached)
- Reduction of awkward postures and potential musculoskeletal injury for the care provider

DESIGNATION
Designation for a sling to remain behind a resident/ patient while in a chair can be decided by the RN in charge, wound nurse, OT/PT, and designated Peer Champion if available on site) or at least one care staff in consultation with any of the above.

REMOVING A SLING

A sling will be removed from behind a resident/ patient while in a chair if:
- The sling is not a universal or hammock sling,
- It is easy to remove,
- The resident/ patient is cooperative
- The resident/ patient has skin integrity issues or any other clinical factors

EXCEPTIONS
If a resident/ patient requests removal of the sling before an outing, then the RN/ Therapist on duty will review and determine if removal of the sling is feasible. If the sling is removed, the RN/ Therapist on duty will ensure a process is in place to re-apply the sling upon return.

ASSISTANCE TEAM - If you need further assistance the following resources can be accessed:
- Manager Resident Services
- Rehabilitation Services
- PEARS & MSIP, Wellness & Safety Advisor or Coordinator

MSIP Patient Handling Coach Workshop—Vancouver Island Health Authority, Wellness and Safety