

WORKER SAFETY AWARENESS PROGRAM

MODULE 4 ADDITIONAL STATE INFORMATION: SPRAINS & STRAINS (ERGONOMICS)

Module Four, Additional State Information: *Sprains & Strains (Ergonomics)* provides basic information about preventing sprain and strain injuries in adult family homes. It recognizes that while Washington State does not have any specific laws or rules related to ergonomics, sprains, strains, or lifting requirements except as an [accommodation for pregnant workers](#), it is important to prevent sprains & strains because they are a leading cause of injuries, missed work, and related costs. Recommendations from the Department of Labor & Industries (L&I) for preventing sprains & strains are provided along with information on how to get training or consultation help for preventing these kinds of injuries. For more information on ergonomics and preventing sprain & strain injuries, please see the AFHC OSHA Module 4 on Ergonomics & Safe Resident Handling.

Grant Project Goal:

The Adult Family Home Council (AFHC) believes that introducing a first-of-its-kind, industry-specific, safety awareness training program will significantly reduce worker injuries in adult family homes.

Background:

The AFHC received a grant from the Safety and Health Investments Projects (SHIP) Program, Washington State Department of Labor & Industries for \$175,000 to develop training and education materials for a worker safety awareness program specific to the adult family home (AFH) industry. Claims data from the Washington State workers' compensation system shows that workers are getting hurt in the AFH industry. There were over 12,000 reported injury claims, including over 100 serious injuries, from 2012 through 2016 in the risk class that includes adult family home businesses. In order to help prevent future injuries, an AFH Worker Safety Awareness Review Committee has been established to oversee development, upkeep, and implementation of worker safety awareness training and education materials specific to the AFH industry.

Training Topics Included in this Module:

1. No Washington State specific ergonomic requirements
 - a. No specific state laws or rules specific to sprains & strains, lifting, or other forms of ergonomics
 - i. Except as an [accommodation for pregnant workers](#)
 - b. All employers in Washington must still meet the general requirement to keep their workplace free from recognized hazards found in the Washington Administrative Code (WAC) [Safety Core Rules](#)
 - c. Sprains & strains are a leading cause of injuries, missed work, & related costs in the adult family home industry
2. L&I recommendations for preventing sprains & strains
3. Training resources are available
 - a. Training resources can be found on L&I's [ergonomics training website](#)
 - b. L&I consultants can help you find solutions to prevent sprains & strains at your adult family home

Training Module Objectives:

- Learn how to prevent sprains and strains
 - Avoid heavy lifting & store items off the floor



- Use wheelchairs & other rolling carts & devices for moving residents or heavy objects
- Change up your movements & reduce risky tasks to avoid fatigue & injuries
- Avoid more than 35 pounds of lift effort
- Learn about resources for getting help in preventing sprains & sprains through training or from L&I consultants

Target Audience:

The target audience includes the owners and operators of the 2,900 adult family homes in Washington and their approximately 14,000 employees. By definition, adult family homes are small businesses located in residential homes, each with unique challenges. The AFHC is committed to supporting and helping adult family homes succeed.

Funding and support for this project has been provided by the State of Washington, Department of Labor & Industries, Safety & Health Investment Projects.

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MODULE 4 ADDITIONAL STATE INFORMATION CHECKLIST: SPRAINS & STRAINS (ERGONOMICS)

- ☐ No Washington State Specific Ergonomic Requirements
 - There are no specific Washington State laws or rules related to sprains & strains, lifting, or other forms of ergonomics
 - Except as an [accommodation for pregnant workers](#)
 - All employers in Washington must still meet the general requirement to keep their workplace free from recognized hazards found in the Washington Administrative Code (WAC) [Safety Core Rules](#)
 - Sprains & strains are a leading source of injuries, missed work, and related costs in the adult family home industry
- ☐ Labor & Industries (L&I) recommendations for preventing sprains & strains
 - Avoid heavy lifting & store items off the floor
 - Lifting from the floor doubles your risk of back injury compared to lifting at waist level
 - Use mechanical lifting devices such as Hoyer lifts, standing assist devices, etc., to help avoid injuries
 - Push, don't pull
 - Pushing lets you use your body weight & larger muscles to move a load
- ☐ Keep it close
 - Shorter reaches when assisting residents or when getting tools, materials, & supplies means less strain on your arms, shoulders, & back
 - Grip, don't pinch
 - Gripping with the whole hand uses stronger muscles than pinching with your fingers. This means less strain on your hands and fingers
 - Keep wrists straight
 - You have more grip strength and you'll feel less strain on your hands and wrists
 - Roll it
 - Use geri chairs, Hoyer lifts, wheel chairs, etc., instead of carrying residents. Use carts or hand trucks for moving heavy objects. Carrying is hard on your hands, arms, and back, and can make a slip or trip more likely
- ☐ Work at waist height
 - Too much bending, kneeling, and squatting puts strain on your back, knees, and hips
- ☐ Keep a level head
 - Tipping, tilting, or twisting your head to see your work puts strain on your neck and shoulders
 - Match work height to the task
 - Set your work a little below elbow height when you must use more force. Set your work a little above elbow height when the task needs a light touch and a better view
 - Change it up

- Moving the same way over and over for a long time can lead to fatigue, mistakes, and injury. Reduce how often and how long risky tasks are done
- L&I recommends no more than 35 pounds of lift effort
 - What is 35 pounds of lift effort?
 - Compare the effort you need to lift or transfer a 35-pound box or sack from a chair or bed to the effort needed to lift or transfer a person
 - Lifting & transfer considerations
 - A resident who is fully or mostly able to support themselves (with very little or no help) may not need lift equipment for safe transfer, except possibly a standing aid or slide board
 - Partly able residents who can use some leg & arm strength may need a sit-to-stand lift or multiple caregivers if the transfer effort is over 35 pounds
 - Residents whose legs are weak or who cannot stand or support much body weight likely need a Hoyer lift or other total body lift to be transferred safely
 - Resident handling in less than ideal conditions, such as lifting from the floor, while bending over, reaching out, or in tight spaces, should be done with lift equipment
- Training resources are available
 - You can find training resources for preventing sprains & strains on L&I's [ergonomics training website](#) and on the health care industry [Solutions for Sprains & Strains webpage](#).
 - L&I consultants can help
 - Ergonomic specialists can help you find solutions to prevent sprain and strain injuries. These injuries are associated with high worker's compensation costs in the adult family home industry
 - L&I consultants can help you create customized solutions specific to the needs of your home
 - L&I consultations are free of charge
- Request a consultation
 - To request a free and confidential safety consultation, contact Washington State's Department of Labor & Industries' Consultation Program by:
 - Calling 360-902-5554
 - Going to: <https://www.lni.wa.gov/safety-health/preventing-injuries-illnesses/request-consultation/>

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MODULE 4 ADDITIONAL STATE INFORMATION RESOURCE LIST: SPRAINS & STRAINS (ERGONOMICS)

- Chapter 49.17 Revised Code of Washington (RCW) Washington Industrial Safety and Health Act (WISHA) state safety laws: <https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=49.17>
- RCW 49.17.060 General Safety Standard that all employers must comply with: <https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=49.17.060>
- Chapter 296-800 Washington Administrative Code (WAC) safety regulations that further define state safety requirements: <https://app.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=296-800>
- Washington State Department of Labor & Industries (L&I) Request Consultation Page for information on how to get free safety & health assistance: <https://www.lni.wa.gov/safety-health/preventing-injuries-illnesses/request-consultation/>
- L&I General Website: lni.wa.gov
- Find a local L&I office near you: <http://www.lni.wa.gov/Offices>
- L&I main Sprains & Strains webpage: <https://lni.wa.gov/safety-health/preventing-injuries-illnesses/sprains-strains/>
- L&I Client Transfers: Safely Match Abilities with Needs: <https://lni.wa.gov/safety-health/docs/TransferClientsSafely.pdf>
- L&I Get Help with Ergonomics Self-Help online courses (includes a testimonial from an adult family home owner about L&I's consultation services): <https://lni.wa.gov/safety-health/preventing-injuries-illnesses/sprains-strains/get-help-with-ergonomics#help-with-office-ergonomics>
- L&I Solutions for Sprains & Strains website with information and resources to prevent sprains and strains in your workplace: <https://lni.wa.gov/safety-health/preventing-injuries-illnesses/sprains-strains/solutions-for-sprains-strains#simple-solutions>
- L&I Industry Guidelines for Sprains & Strains (includes resources for healthcare workers): <https://lni.wa.gov/safety-health/preventing-injuries-illnesses/sprains-strains/solutions-for-sprains-strains#industry-guidelines>
- L&I Sit-To-Stand Devices: An Option to Transfer Patients document: <https://lni.wa.gov/safety-health/docs/SitToStandDevices.pdf>
- L&I Ergonomics Essentials online training program: http://wisha-training.lni.wa.gov/Training/articulate/ErgoEssentials/story_html5.html
- L&I Lift Height and Risk of Injury online tool: http://wisha-training.lni.wa.gov/training/articulate/liftheighttool/story_html5.html
- L&I Standing Transfer Methods online tool that helps identify recommended resident transfer methods based on how much the resident can help: http://wisha-training.lni.wa.gov/training/articulate/StandingTransferMethods/story_html5.html
- L&I Limits to Prevent Strains and Sprains downloadable slideshow (provides recommendations for the maximum times workers should lift objects based on the weight being lifted): <http://wisha-training.lni.wa.gov/training/presentations/LimitstoPreventSprainsandStrains.ppsx>

- L&I Ergonomic Guidelines for Nursing Facilities downloadable slide show:
<https://slidetodoc.com/ergonomics-guidelines-for-nursing-facilities-recommendations-for-preventing/>
- L&I Dr. Ergo (humorous ergonomics YouTube training video):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BdyHf6Llk9Q>
- L&I Safety & Health Investment Projects (SHIP) grant project by Josephine Sunset Home, Inc on Good, Better, Best Body Mechanics- Videos on Proper Techniques: <https://lni.wa.gov/safety-health/grants-committees-partnerships/safety-health-investment-projects-grant-program/ship-grants-2013xc00206>
- L&I SHIP grant project by the Washington State University College of Nursing in collaboration with the Washington State Nurses Association on Protecting Nurses as a Valuable Resource (including guidelines for safe patient handling): <https://lni.wa.gov/safety-health/grants-committees-partnerships/safety-health-investment-projects-grant-program/ship-grants-2009xh00119>
- Washington State Office of the Attorney General Pregnancy and Breastfeeding Accommodations webpage (Includes a 17 pound lifting restriction): <https://www.atg.wa.gov/pregnancy-and-breastfeeding-accommodations>
- Federal OSHA Safe Patient Handling- Preventing Musculoskeletal Disorders in Nursing Homes: <https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/publications/OSHA3708.pdf>
- Federal OSHA Safe Patient Handling guidelines:
https://www.osha.gov/dsg/hospitals/patient_handling.html
- California's Department of Labor Relations Working Safer and Easier for Janitors, Custodians, and Housekeepers publication: https://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/dosh_publications/janitors.pdf
- National Institutes of Health MedlinePlus webpage on ergonomics:
<https://medlineplus.gov/ergonomics.html>
- National Institutes of Health MedlinePlus webpage on strains and sprains:
<https://medlineplus.gov/sprainsandstrains.html>
- Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety Medical History Checklist: Symptoms Survey for Work-Related Musculoskeletal Disorders (WMSDs):
https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/diseases/work_related_WMSD.html

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