

# MSI PREVENTION BULLETIN 3

## Bed Making and Cleaning in Health Care

**Housekeepers and care aides** employed in health-care settings make and clean beds on a regular basis as part of their job. This bulletin provides information regarding the typical musculoskeletal issues faced by workers performing these tasks and some possible risk controls to either eliminate or minimize the MSI risk. This information is only a guideline, and the employer must still complete an MSI risk assessment to accurately determine the risks and appropriate control measures applicable to their worksite.

MSI Issue: Making Beds	Possible Risk Control Measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Arm stretches away from the body when reaching across beds, resulting in an awkward shoulder posture.</li></ul>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The trunk of the body is in an awkward posture because of bending forward or sideways to remove dirty linen and put on clean linen.</li></ul>   <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Worker stoops forward, squats, or kneels to manually crank beds up or down.</li></ul>  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure workers walk around the bed to avoid excessive forward reaching.</li></ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Have workers raise the bed, if possible.</li><li>• Train workers to bend the knees or to partially kneel on a corner of the bed to avoid bending their back.</li></ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Phase out manual crank beds and replace them with beds that can be raised automatically. Beds that can be raised should always be raised before workers do bed making or cleaning tasks.</li><li>• Provide a foam pad for workers to kneel on.</li><li>• Train workers to bend their knees to avoid stooping at the waist.</li><li>• Avoid cranking the bed directly in front of the body or far to the side of the body. Crank close to the side of the body using the dominant hand.</li></ul>



MSI Issue: Moving Furniture to Clean Area	Possible Risk Control Measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Worker pulls bed away from the wall or lifts or pulls furniture out of the way so the area around the bed can be cleaned.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide improved castors on beds.</li> <li>Remove carpeting from underneath beds.</li> <li>Provide a second person to assist.</li> <li>Arrange beds away from walls and heavy furniture.</li> </ul>
MSI Issue: Cleaning the Mattress, the Bed Base, and under the Bed	Possible Risk Control Measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The trunk of the body is in an awkward posture when the worker bends forward to clean the full width of the mattress.            </li> <li>The shoulder is in awkward posture when worker holds the mattress up to clean the underside of the mattress or the base of the bed underneath.            </li> <li>The trunk of the body is in an awkward posture when the worker bends to reach below the bed to clean. Worker may squat or kneel on hard floor to access the area under the bed.            </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Train workers to clean the closest half of the mattress and then walk around the bed to clean the other side.</li> <li>Train workers to clean the top of the mattress and then turn the mattress over to clean the underside. Clean half of the bed base at one time.</li> <li>To turn over a mattress for cleaning, pull it in close to the body and then flip it over, leaving the cleaned side of the mattress supported on clean bed rails.</li> <li>Provide kneepads or foam to allow workers to kneel safely on a hard floor.</li> <li>Provide a long-handled brush for cleaning lower parts of the bed frame to reduce reaching.</li> </ul>