

## Guidelines for Safe Bathing with the use of a Shower Cabinet

### Definitions

- **Shower Cabinets** are fixed facility units with an attached seat that allows patients to sit while being showered. Typically, the seat can move forward partially outside of the cabinet to assist with a patient transfer. A front panel is usually provided and placed on the front of the cabinet to minimize water spillage.

### Assessment Considerations (completed by regulated healthcare provider)

- Patient must be assessed for ability and equipment needs. Do not proceed with transfer and contact supervisor if there are changes in patient's ability. The patient may not be appropriate for the use of the shower cabinet if:
  - Unable to sit upright self-supporting on the side of a bed or toilet.
  - Unable to understand and respond to instructions to stay seated in an upright position.
  - Agitated or has a history of aggressive or unpredictable behavior.
- The chosen methods of bathing and transfer must be documented in the patient's care plan. Options for transfer method to the shower cabinet are (refer to the appropriate Safe Work Procedure):
  - Independent or Supervised
  - 1 or 2 person transfer with a transfer belt
  - Sit stand lift
  - Compatible lift hygiene chair

**Note:** One or more healthcare workers (HCW) are required for bathing; however, two may be required to transfer the patient on/off the equipment dependent on the patient's transfer status.

### Considerations for Equipment Use

- The patient's weight should not exceed the safe working limit of the shower cabinet.
- Visually inspect the equipment before each use to ensure it is in good working order.
- To transfer the patient in and out of the cabinet, the front panel is to be removed from the shower cabinet by lifting it upwards. Ensure to pull carefully in a direction away from face to avoid injury. The front panel should then be reapplied for the bathing process to minimize water spillage.
- Most shower cabinets have a seat that moves forward to assist with a patient transfer. If using this feature, ensure the seat is locked prior to transferring the patient on/off the equipment. When moving the seat forward and back with the patient seated, ensure the patient's legs, arms, fingers, etc. are clear from obstacles to prevent pinching or injury.
- If the patient has been assessed to perform a weight bearing transfer (independent, supervised, or 1-2 person assist with a transfer belt) the cabinet seat must move forward into an outward position during the transfer and the patient should not step up/or down to enter or exit the cabinet.
- If a lift hygiene chair is compatible with the shower cabinet (refer to manufacturer's guidelines), the shower cabinet seat can be removed and the lift hygiene chair can be used for the transfer and throughout the bathing process. Ensure lift hygiene chair brakes are on during the transfer and bathing process.
- Transfers should never be attempted on slippery surfaces.
- If available, secure the safety belt around the patient if needed (based on patient assessment).
- Never leave the patient unattended while using the shower cabinet.
- Patient should remain seated in the shower cabinet at all times.

### Bathing Considerations

- Always check the water temperature prior to bathing a patient.
- Wash any hard to reach areas before or after transferring a patient into the shower cabinet.
- Shower the patient using proper body mechanics and/or equipment to avoid over reaching:
  - Use long handled sponge where available.
  - Allow patient to assist washing areas if able (e.g. arms, thighs, etc.)
  - Use one arm to support your body if over-reaching.
  - Front panel can be removed to wash legs, feet, etc. Kneel for short periods to reduce low back discomfort. Use cushioning for the knees (e.g. knee pad, folded up towel). Front panel should be reapplied when rinsing lower body to prevent water spillage.

*Please Note: These are guidelines only and should not replace clinical assessment. Please refer to equipment manual for manufacture safety guidelines specific to your equipment.*