

## Guidelines for Safe Bathing with the use of a Shower Commode or Tilt Shower Chairs

### Definitions

- **Shower Commodes** are portable chairs on wheels that allow patients to be transported into a shower stall and be seated while showering. Patients are transferred onto the shower commode as per their assessed transfer method and then wheeled into the shower for bathing. Typically there is a cut out in the seat to provide caregivers easier access to assist with hygiene.
- **Tilt Shower Chairs** are similar to shower commodes, however the seat can tilt back for those patients who can't maintain an upright sitting position. In addition to the tilt option, tilt shower chairs may come with a variety of other features such as recline, a powered motor, and height adjustability.

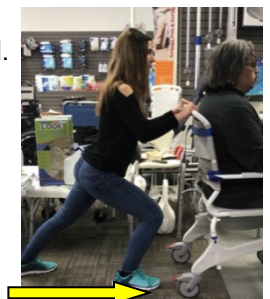
### Assessment Considerations (completed by regulated healthcare provider)

- 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 the shower commode or tilt shower chair if:
  - Agitated or has a history of aggressive or unpredictable behavior
  - Unable to maintain a safe seated position for duration of bathing task (i.e. making attempts to climb or slide out unsafely)
  - Self-supported trunk control and able to reposition self (shower commode only)
- The chosen methods of bathing and transfer must be documented in the patient's care plan. Options for transfer method to the tilt shower chair/commode are (refer to the appropriate Safe Work Procedure):
  - 1 or 2 person transfer with a transfer belt
  - Stand at grab bar in tub room and switch wheelchair with shower chair/commode
  - Sit stand lift
  - Floor lift
  - Overhead track lift

**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 patients transfer status.

### Considerations for Equipment Use

- The patients weight should not exceed the safe working limit of the shower commode/ tilt shower chair.
- Visually inspect the equipment before each use to ensure it is in good working order.
- Transfers should never be attempted on slippery surfaces.
- If provided, secure the safety belt to prevent buoyancy & maintain position in the chair.
- Adjust the tilt on the chair to support the patient's trunk (tilt shower chair only).
- If the shower chair has both a tilt and recline feature, always slightly tilt the chair before reclining to prevent the patient from sliding when in the chair. Do not operate the tilt and recline handles together.
- Place the patient's feet on the foot rests when tilted and when the resident is being transported
- Only use the equipment on level surfaces.
- Brakes should always be applied on the shower commode or tilt shower chair when transferring the patient on and off the bathing equipment.
- Never leave the patient unattended while using a shower commode or tilt shower chair
- Use good body mechanics when moving shower commode/tilt shower chair:
  - Stand with one foot ahead of the other, feet hip width apart and knees bent. Hold onto vertical side bars or horizontal top bar of backrest with elbows close to body.
  - Shift weight forward from back leg to front leg to PUSH chair/commode forward.



- If there is a threshold in the doorway to the shower area, walk backward and PULL commode/chair through doorway, moving one wheel at a time over the threshold. Shift weight side to side over threshold. Shift weight back to pull once over threshold.



- If tilting/reclining a tilt shower chair, stand with one foot ahead of the other, feet hip width apart and knees bent. Hold the lever using a straight wrist and keeping elbows close to the body. Tilt the chair by weight shifting through your legs down and back. To release the tilt, follow the same steps, but weight shift through your legs forward and up.



### Bathing Considerations

- Always check water temperature prior to bathing patient.
- Brakes should be applied on the shower commode and tilt shower chair when bathing the patient.
- Wash any hard to reach areas before or after transferring patient onto the shower commode/tilt shower chair.
- Shower the patient using proper body mechanics and/or equipment to avoid over reaching.
  - Allow patient to assist washing areas if able (e.g. arms, thighs, etc.)
  - Ask patient to straighten knee/lift leg to reduce bending/reaching if able.
  - When washing lower body/feet, use elevating footrest on tilt shower chair if available. If not available kneel for short periods to reduce low back discomfort. Use cushioning for the knees (e.g. knee pad, followed up towel).
- Dry patient and underside of chair/commode before transporting patient away from shower area.

### Specific Considerations For Commonly Used Shower/Chairs Commodes\*

*\*This list is not exhaustive and includes only some of the most common models. No particular product is endorsed or recommended.*

- **Standard Shower Commode:**
  - Ensure casters are in an outward position before engaging the locks for optimal forward and lateral stability.



- Swing footrests away or remove before doing the transfer.
  - Increased tipping risk if the patient leans forward, over the side, or leans forward and puts weight of the footrest.
  - Do not lift or move the commode by pulling on the armrests when occupied as the armrests can become detached and may cause a fall.
- **Invacare™ Tilt Shower Chair:**
- Increased tipping risk if the patient leans forward in the tilt shower commode and puts weight on the footrests, when chair is in upright position and front wheel casters are not facing forward when locked. Avoid forward leaning patient with weight on footplates when patient is in un-tilted position.
  - Ensure the foot rests are swiveled to the side or the footplates are folded up before seating or removing the patient from the tilt shower commode. Turn the front wheel casters so that the lock is pointing forwards and lock all four wheel casters before transferring the patient.
  - Ensure that seat surface is securely fixed to the seat frame before use.
  - Ensure the patient's arms are placed on the armrests before tilting.
- **Broda™ Tilt Shower Chair:**
- While the patient is tilted, ensure the patient's feet are elevated with footrest to prevent the patient from sliding forward or falling forward off the chair.
  - Ensure the patient is properly positioned before using the tilt mechanism to prevent the chair from tipping forward or backward.
  - Ensure the patient's body is clear of all pinch points and the brakes are applied with the caster wheels swiveled outwards, before adjusting the chair. Only one caregiver at a time should operate the chair's functions.
  - Ensure seat clips are secured to the frame before use.
- **Arjo (Carendo)™ Tilt Shower Chair:**
- To avoid entrapment, make sure to keep the patient's hair, arms and feet close to the body and use designated grab supports during any movement.
  - To avoid pinching of genitals and skin, always use the seat cushion and make sure there is enough clearance during movement over toilet or bedpan.
  - Ensure the patient is properly positioned and brakes are applied on equipment to prevent the patient from falling out of the chair.
  - Only perform one function movement at a time. Pushing on more than one button at a time will stop all movements.

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