



Safe Patient Mobilization: Reducing Sling Loss

Safe Patient Mobilization (SPM)
Program

OHSU's 280 ceiling lifts, as well as portable floor lifts, are used to safely reposition and transfer patients who cannot move themselves.

Washable fabric slings are used with this equipment – without these slings, the equipment is rendered unusable.

Direct care staff consistently encountered sling shortages, despite regular purchases of new slings by Logistics and Nursing Administration – up to \$100,000 of purchases annually.

In late 2019, Logistics manually tracked a sling purchase through multiple laundry cycles and discovered we had a 78% loss over just a few months.

A focused education and communication effort with direct care staff in 2021 reduced sling loss from nearly 80% to 18%.



TIPS FOR STAFF

SAFE PATIENT MOBILIZATION PROGRAM

Prevent Equipment Loss

SITUATION	PREVENT EQUIPMENT LOSS
ENHANCED TO TRANSFER THE PATIENT	Check that EMS is not leaving with a HomeMatt, lift sling or SLIPP. If the receiving facility requires that patient arrive on a sling, single patient use slings can be web ordered 402/9753. If possible, please plan ahead and order the day before discharge.
LIFT SLING IS DAMAGED OR HEAVILY SOILED	Don't throw it away! All damaged slings go in regular laundry. Laundry inspects slings for damage and will return any damaged slings for repair or replacement.
HOME-MATT OR SLIPP IS BLOODSTAINED	Don't throw it away! Try to clean any stains with bleach wipes first. If stains remain, contact epidemiology.
GATHERING SOILED SLINGS	All soiled slings go in regular laundry, including lift slings. If you see someone throwing them in the trash, stop them.
MISSING/UNRECOVERABLE HOME-MATT, LIFT SLING OR SLIPP	Submit a PSI to document the occurrence.

Estimated current equipment loss

Lift slings: 80% annually	SLIPP: 13% annually	Lift slings: ~\$100,000 annually	Repositioning sling \$213 each
			Rest repositioning sling \$300 each
			Secured Slings \$201 - \$417 each
			HomeMatt: \$1,800 each
			Sit-to-stand belt: \$499 each
			SLIPP: \$200 each

Cost of lost equipment

SLIPP were surveyed in November 2020. The Sling Loss Survey revealed that 13% of respondents have seen a sling placed in the trash by a CL, RN, or PT staff. Nearly 9% of respondents have seen a sling leave the hospital with EMS, and 1% have seen slings leave with patients or families.

Be the correct message:
Never let a sling leave the hospital unless you intend for it to be used in another location.

Causes of loss: Patient dignity, comfort, skin integrity and safety
Employee fatigue & increased injury risk

Questions: Call your direct care representative
Medical Supplies: Call your direct care representative
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Preventing Equipment Loss flyer shared with staff



Slings individually numbered and tracked after each laundry cycle.

The message:
Sling loss is the primary reason slings aren't available when needed. Preventing sling loss is everyone's responsibility.

Never allow a sling to leave the hospital.

All used, damaged, and soiled slings go into regular laundry for processing.

Never throw a sling in the trash.

OHSU's Sling Loss Workgroup convened Fall 2020, consisting of staff from the SPM Program, Quality Management, and direct care and management representatives from several inpatient units. Logistics staff partnered with this group to individually track slings.

- **Fall 2020 staff survey** asked where staff think sling loss occurs. 250 responses revealed the following themes:
 - Severely soiled or damaged slings thrown away
 - Slings sent home with patients
 - Slings leaving with EMS during patient discharges
 - Sling loss through the Morgue and funeral homes
 - Some staff unaware of sling workflow – all slings are to go into laundry for cleaning and/or if damaged
 - Some staff are unaware that single-patient-use ("disposable") slings are available when needed to facilitate patient discharges.

Addressing the Issue & Outcome

- *Preventing Equipment Loss* flyer developed to raise awareness.
- RNs and managers in the Sling Loss Workgroup raised awareness about sling loss through individual conversations on their units.
- Unit nursing representatives also reached through Nursing Marketplace shared governance meetings, and the need for multiple communication venues and face-to-face conversations conveyed by staff.
- Decedent Affairs communication with transport companies to remind them slings cannot leave the hospital.
- 150 slings purchased in December 2020 individually tracked by Logistics.
- Follow up and searches on units conducted for slings missing > 1 month.
- Continued messaging via newsletters, SPM classes, peer-to-peer and management conversations.

Slings were tracked for 6 months. As of May 2021, loss of the December 2020 purchase is at 18%, with the majority of slings having come through 10-15 laundry cycles. **RESULT: a steadier supply of slings for staff to use with their patients.**