

Patient handling: Soaker pads

Using soaker pads to reposition patients puts workers at risk of musculoskeletal injuries (MSIs) such as sprains and strains.

Soaker pads, also known as incontinence pads or bed pads, are designed to absorb urine. They help keep beds and linens dry and protect patients' skin.

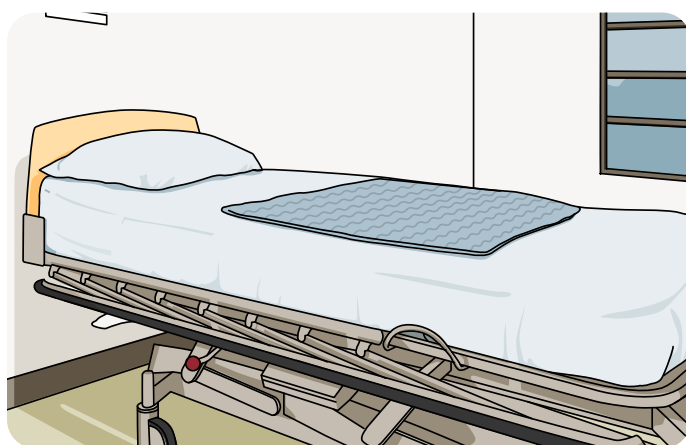
Soaker pads should only be used for their intended purpose. They are not meant for repositioning patients.

Risks of using soaker pads to reposition patients

There are several concerns with using soaker pads to reposition patients in bed:

- Soaker pads are not designed for repositioning patients.
- Soaker pads do not have low-friction properties. Sliding them requires great effort.
- Soaker pads are small and positioned under the lower part of a patient's trunk and upper legs. The pads do not fully support the patient's trunk and shoulders. So using them for repositioning results in an unbalanced load and greater effort.

Under section 4.3(1)(b)(i) of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation, all equipment must be used according to the manufacturer's instructions. Soaker pad manufacturers should provide instructions for the safe use of the product.



Controlling the risks of repositioning

Under sections 4.47–4.50 of the Regulation, employers must identify, assess, and control the risk of musculoskeletal injury to workers. This risk must be assessed and reduced to the lowest level using appropriate control measures. Repositioning patients is usually achieved by doing the following:

- Using mechanical devices such as an overhead lift with a repositioning sling
- Using non-mechanical aids such as a low-friction slide or draw sheet

For more information, see the [Patient handling](#) page on worksafebc.com, including the bulletin *Moving and handling people: Reducing the risk*.