

Skilled Nursing Facilities

Ergonomics Priority for Prevention | May 2024

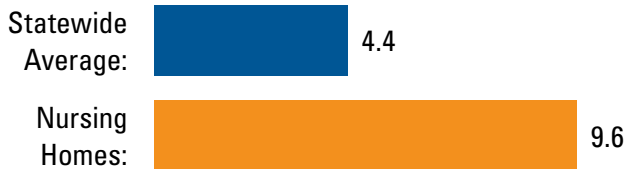


Employers in risk class 6108 operate skilled nursing facilities, including nursing homes, rehabilitation centers, and similar facilities. Common tasks include transferring and repositioning residents in bed, providing rehabilitative therapies, doing laundry, preparing and serving meals, and housekeeping.

Work-related Musculoskeletal Disorders (WMSDs)

Nursing homes and skilled nursing centers have a compensable* WMSD rate that is more than twice the Washington statewide average for all industries.

WMSD Claim Rate per 1,000 FTEs



Common causes of WMSDs	Injury description examples
Lifting during resident care activities	"Transferring resident from wheelchair to bed"
Holding or turning residents	"Boosting resident to head of bed"
Pushing or pulling objects	"Pulling a hoist lift when transferring a resident"
Bending, climbing, crawling, reaching, or twisting	"Knelt down to put shoes on a resident"

* Compensable claims involve wage replacement for lost work time (four or more days), total permanent disability, fatality, or a worker kept on salary by the employer during disability.

Top three occupations reporting WMSDs

1. Nursing aides, orderlies, and attendants
2. Personal and home care aides
3. Registered nurses

Workers with more serious WMSDs received time loss benefits. Most of these workers needed 28+ days to recover before returning to work.

Ideas for preventing WMSDs

- Develop a resident-handling and mobility safety plan.
- Train caregivers on the use of equipment and procedures.
- Use sit-stand lifts and total body lifts in place of stand pivot transfers with a gait belt.
- Use lift assist devices for bringing residents up from the floor when they have fallen.
- Use friction-reducing slider sheets when boosting residents in bed.

For more information and to learn about requesting an ergonomics consultation, visit lni.wa.gov/Ergonomics. For questions, email Ergonomics@lni.wa.gov. For more information about the risk classification descriptions, visit apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=296-17A-6108.

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