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Marde Bevan
Coroner's Registrar
Coroners Court of Victoria
65 Kavanagh Street
Southbank VIC 3006

By email:
cpuresponses@coronerscourt.vic.gov.au

Court Ref: COR 2016 003726

Dear Ms Bevan

Finding without inquest into the death of Doris Spratling

I refer to the findings and recommendations made by Coroner English in relation to the death of Doris Spratling, received by WorkSafe Victoria (WorkSafe) on 2 January 2019.

I note that Her Honour recommended the following and advise that this recommendation has been implemented:

"WorkSafe Victoria, the Victorian health and safety regulator consider once again publishing a Safety Alert regarding the use of ceiling hoists by aged care facilities and consider amending guidance notes and publications on transferring people using hoists to highlight the need to comply with manufacturer's instructions and implement a system of cross checking connections prior to use".

On 23 January 2019, WorkSafe published a new safety alert titled '*Portable patient handling ceiling Hoists: Information for employers about safe use of portable patient handling ceiling hoists*' and available at <https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/safety-alerts/portable-patient-handling-ceiling-hoists>. This new safety alert contains content from the 2013 Safety Alert referred to in Her Honour's recommendations directed at Leading Age Services and Aged & Community Services Australia, which has since been removed from WorkSafe's website, as well additional content regarding the need to follow manufacturer's instructions and cross check connections prior to use.

WorkSafe is currently undertaking a wide scale review of all guidance available on its website and is revising/removing this guidance as necessary. In response to Her Honour's recommendation, WorkSafe has prioritised review of guidance regarding transferring people using hoists, and will amend this guidance where practicable, to highlight the need to comply with manufacturer's instructions and implement a system of cross checking connections prior to use.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact Coronial Lawyer, Alexis Hurwitz, on 4243 7223 or coronerscourt@worksafe.vic.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Clare Amies', written in a cursive style.

Dated: 12/2/2019

**Clare Amies
Chief Executive
WorkSafe Victoria**

Enc: Portable patient handling ceiling hoists: Information for employers about safe use of portable patient handling ceiling hoists

Portable patient handling ceiling hoists

Published 23 Jan 2019

Information for employers about safe use of portable patient handling ceiling hoists.

Background

Recently a resident at an aged care facility was fatally injured when the resident fell while being moved using a portable patient handling ceiling hoist.

There have been several other incidents where portable patient handling ceiling hoists, which use latching hooks and wands or just wands (also known as extension arms), failed when transferring patients, causing serious injuries.

Control measures

As an employer, you must, so far as is reasonably practicable, ensure that persons including patients, employees, contractors and members of the public are not exposed to risks to their health or safety.

This includes ensuring plant (such as portable patient handling ceiling hoists) is provided and maintained in a way that is safe and without risks to health. You must also provide employees and contractors with necessary information, instruction, training and supervision to perform their jobs safely and without risks to health.

You should:

- use permanently attached (as opposed to portable) ceiling hoists where reasonably practicable
- ensure manufacturer instructions for installation, use, maintenance and cleaning of hoists are followed in the workplace
- provide information, instruction and training to employees and contractors on how to properly connect, check and use hoists, and provide supervision as necessary
- require employees and contractors to undertake pre and post connection checks (and cross checks) of hoist components that are required to lock together during use
- ensure load ratings are identified and marked on hoist suspension components, and keep records of these ratings at the workplace
- arrange regular inspection, testing and maintenance of hoists – it may be necessary to engage a third-party service provider who has expertise in hoist inspection and maintenance
- withdraw and dispose of damaged, worn or faulty hoist components

This safety alert replaces the safety alert Patient handling – portable ceiling hoists (August 2013).

More information

For additional information on the safe use of hoists and maintenance and testing requirements, see AS/NZS ISO 10535: Hoists for the transfer of disabled persons – Requirements and test methods.

Related pages

Safety alert: Portable hoists with sling attachments (<https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/safety-alerts/portable-hoists-sling-attachments>).