

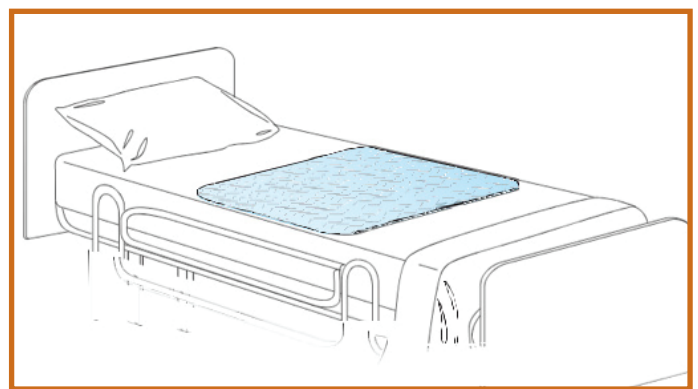
HAZARD ALERT

SOAKER PADS ARE NOT REPOSITIONING AIDS

Health care workers are using soaker pads to reposition (boost or turn) clients in bed, despite the risk of sustaining sprains or strains (musculoskeletal injuries). Soaker pads, also known as incontinence pads or bed pads, are designed to absorb urine to keep beds and linens dry and protect the client's skin. A soaker pad should only be used for its intended purpose – it is not meant for repositioning clients.

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

- Soaker pads are not designed for repositioning clients.
- 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 client's trunk and upper legs. The pads do not fully support the client's trunk and shoulders, so using them to move clients results in an unbalanced load.
- Under paragraph 9(2)(a) of New Brunswick's *Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Act*, all equipment must be used as directed by the supplier, and in accordance with the manufacturer's directions. Soaker pad manufacturers should provide instructions for the product's safe use.



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Recommended Preventive Measures

Subsection 50(2) of the *OHS Act* requires employers to adopt a code of practice specified by WorkSafeNB or to establish their own code of practice. Where warranted, WorkSafeNB will require workplaces to establish codes of practice to minimize the risk of injuries due to client handling [subsection 50(3)].

The client's abilities must be assessed to determine the risk level and which controls are necessary. Using soaker pads to reposition clients increases the risk of injury to workers – and is not an appropriate control measure.

For more information, consult the [Guide to Developing a Code of Practice for Client Handling](#), available on WorkSafeNB's website.