

## **Adult Inpatient Falls with Suspected Spinal Injury in Acute**

### **Context and background;**

While the incidence of falls resulting in a spinal injury is infrequent and uncommon, the potential injurious harm sustained by patients is significant, with possible catastrophic outcomes. Within the last 2 years, the Acute Directorate in SHSCT have had 7 falls graded as either major or catastrophic requiring SAI process of which 1 resulted in a spinal injury being sustained.

Currently, the Acute Directorate have no definitive process to manage the care of a patient with suspected spinal injury post fall. This presents significant risk to our patients. Establishing a standardised management process will mitigate risk and provide assurances of safe and effective post falls care where a spinal injury is suspected. This will enable the launch of an acute falls training package for multi-disciplinary staff on the HSC E-Learning platform. This training is currently ongoing and being implemented along with an updated post falls pathway for acute.

The SOP below intends to provide guidance for appropriately trained staff to undertake the initial management of a patient with a suspected spinal injury post fall. It is expected to support staff to understand the roles and responsibilities in the event that a patient requires spinal immobilisation.

The attached proposal from Solutions Training & Advisory Ltd outlines a training programme to ensure selected staff are appropriately trained to manage the care of a patient with suspected spinal injury following a fall.

## Standard Operating Procedure for suspected / actual spinal injury following an inpatient fall

- In the event of an inpatient fall with a suspected spinal injury (Monday-Sunday 0730-2030), appropriately trained ward staff (Band 6 or 7) should lead the initial post fall management to include; C-Spine immobilisation, the application of a hard collar and co-ordination of a log roll to ensure safe transfer with a scoop. Health rosters should be completed to ensure trained staff are on duty during these times.
- Monday-Sunday in the OOH between 2030 - 0730, ward staff should contact the clinical co-ordinator on Bleep 1795 to undertake this role.
- In the absence of trained ward staff, the ward should contact the Control Room on 60624 who will source and delegate a member of staff to undertake this role.
- Ward staff should retrieve the scoop and hard collar which should be available and accessible on the ward (see list below).

(The fallen patient should not be lifted onto an airflow/ pressure relieving mattress if spinal injury suspected.)

Trauma mattress or Foam (firm) mattress should be used until spinal injury ruled out.)

- Staff designated by control room will only attend the fall to manage and co-ordinate the spinal immobilisation. Therefore, it is vitally important that ward staff adhere to and implement all other Post Falls Management processes.
- A register will be maintained to record staff training and yearly refresher training and this should also be recorded on Health Roster.

Ref: NICE guidelines “spinal injury assessment and initial management”

1.1.5 “Assessment of cervical spine injury” Feb 2016

**Remember to complete a DATIX for each and every fall.**

	Location																			
Scoop 1	<b>ED</b>																			
Scoop 2	<b>Trauma</b>																			
Scoop 3	<b>Ortho/</b> Haem	Location of Scoop stretchers for use in suspected spinal injury or similar post fall																		
Scoop 4	<b>1 west/</b> 1 East	<b>Wards in red are the current locations of the stretchers</b>										<b>CAH Site</b>								
Scoop 5	<b>AMU</b>																			
Scoop 6	<b>1 North/</b> 1 South																			
Scoop 7	2 North/ <b>2 South</b>																		As at 12/10/2023	
Scoop 8	3 North/ <b>3 South</b>																			
Scoop 9	<b>4 North/</b> 4 South																			
Scoop 10	<b>Ramone 1</b>																			
Scoop 11	<b>Male</b> <b>Med DHH</b>																			
Scoop 12	<b>Fem Surg</b> <b>DHH</b>	<b>Wards in green are the current locations of the stretchers</b>										<b>DHH Site</b>								
Scoop 13	<b>Stroke</b> <b>rehab</b> <b>DHH</b>																			
Scoop 14	<b>ED DHH</b>																			