



Providing Adequate Supervision to Prevent Falls

Guidance from CMS (The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services) states that every long-term care facility should ensure the environment is free of hazards and each resident receives adequate supervision when needed. CMS refers to “supervision” as staff being present to intervene and decrease accident risks. The type and frequency of supervision should be based on the individual’s assessed needs and the identified hazards in the environment. This could vary between residents and even vary for the same resident over time. Tools, such as Bed-Check, can assist in monitoring a resident, but does not eliminate the need for adequate supervision. Lack of adequate supervision is determined when the facility...

Identified that a resident should be supervised but they did not provide the supervision

Failed to assess a resident that had an accident and it could have been avoided with supervision

Should have been aware of the hazards but failed to provide supervision.

Fall alarms, such as Bed-Check, are tools that alert staff when movement or absence of weight is detected to prevent falls from occurring. Fall alarms used in conjunction with supervision serve a variety of purposes such as...

Warning staff that a resident has changed position, giving staff enough time to assist the resident

Warning staff that the resident has shortly left the bed or chair giving staff time to intercept the fall before it occurs

Promoting speedy assistance to residents who have already fallen to reduce fall complications from the amount of time the resident lies unaided

Serving as an alternative to nurse call bells for residents who are noncompliant or unable to use their call bell for any reason

Serving as an assessment tool that monitors the frequency of resident attempts to leave in order to identify trends so that staff knows when to provide interventions and supervision.

References:

Tideiksaar R. Falls in older persons, 3rd Edition. Baltimore: Health Professions Press, 2002.

Tideiksaar R. Guide to Exit Alarms. Baltimore: Health Professions Press, 2006.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services