

## Management Oversight in Home Healthcare

Home healthcare, which has been projected to create more than 1 million jobs between 2016 and 2026,<sup>1</sup> is an occupation that involves health and safety risks because home care staff usually work alone in a largely uncontrolled environment.<sup>2</sup> Injuries and illnesses are some of the health and safety risks that may result from home health staff performing their jobs. Other home care risks include those involving employment issues, workers' compensation, and more. Risks in the social environment and community also may be incurred.

Management oversight of various factors is integral to mitigate potential risks involving

home care staff. To pinpoint specific possible risks, an organization may perform a review of the occupational hazards in patients' homes. Once these hazards are identified, plans may be devised to lessen the home health staff's potential risk.

Organizations also should create programs to prevent violence, musculoskeletal injuries, and sharps mishaps for the home health staff they employ to lessen any potential liability exposure.

The risk tips in this resource provide a high-level overview of advice on reducing risks to home healthcare personnel.

1

Assess the inside and outside of patients' homes for any unsafe environmental conditions. Plan to work with the patients/families and external agencies to look into and resolve any unsafe conditions identified in the assessment.

2

Provide home health staff with regulatory agency resources and contact information, including local emergency medical services, law enforcement, and area aging services.

3

Conduct periodic onsite audits of home health staff to ensure compliance with policies and procedures and appropriate patient care.

4

Ensure home health staff know their scope of practice and professional responsibilities to their patients.

5

Manage risks associated with hiring, firing, and retaining home health staff. For more information about hiring qualified staff, see [Risk Tips: Hiring Qualified Staff for Home Healthcare](#).

6

Comply with the laws and regulations on wages, overtime, and worker classification.

7

Enact policies and procedures to prevent discrimination and harassment. Respond to any complaints in a timely manner.

8

Conduct routine documentation reviews of patient health records to ensure that patient care reflects provider orders and complies with policies and procedures as well as regulatory mandates.

9

Implement a program to prevent musculoskeletal disorders in home health staff. Provide or help patients arrange for lifts, transfer devices, and adaptive devices as necessary to reduce potential injury risk.

10

Implement a comprehensive workplace violence prevention program to protect home health staff.

11

Implement programs to prevent sharps injuries and exposure to body fluids for home health staff. Be sure to respond promptly to any exposures that occur.

12

Pinpoint any factors leading to stress among home health staff. Modify your systems to mitigate those stress factors, and support individual stress management strategies.

13

Examine and revise as necessary organizational policies about professional boundaries, including policies related to the use of social media, personal electronic devices, and photography.

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Manage driving-related safety and liability risks for home health staff through driver and vehicle safety programs. Be sure to carry appropriate and sufficient insurance coverage.

## Resources

- [ECRI: Home Care: Staff-Related Risks](#)
- [National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health: Caring for Yourself While Caring for Others: Training for Homecare Workers](#)
- [National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health: Occupational Violence Resources](#)
- [Occupational Safety and Health Administration: Home Healthcare](#)

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Paraprofessional Healthcare Institute (PHI). (2019). U.S. home care workers: Key facts. Retrieved from <https://phinational.org/resource/u-s-home-care-workers-key-facts-2019/>

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration. (n.d.). Home healthcare. Retrieved from [www.osha.gov/home-healthcare](http://www.osha.gov/home-healthcare)

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