

SN (NI) 2001/23

DATE: 18 June 2001

**For Attention and Action by:
Chief Executive of each HSS Trust
General Manager/Chief Executive of each HSS Board
Chief Executive of each Agency**



**HEALTH ESTATES
ESTATE POLICY**

**NORTHERN
IRELAND
ADVERSE
INCIDENT
CENTRE**

TITLE:

Rollators: Risk of Collapse and Other Issues

MANUFACTURER/SUPPLIER

Various

PROBLEM

Rollators (often known as Delta walkers or Tri-Wheel walkers) have collapsed in use due to a loose central locking mechanism, causing serious user injury.

Reports have also been received on other safety issues concerning: brake adjustment, locking handles, front castor wheel movement and inadequate maintenance instructions. (See Annex)

DISTRIBUTION

This notice should be brought to the attention of all who need to know or be aware of it, including those listed below, in accordance with local procedures. This will include:

- Liaison Officers
- Risk Managers
- Health & Safety Officers/Advisors
- Carers for the Elderly
- Learning Disability Services
- Health Visitors
- Hospices
- Nursing Directors
- Medical, Nursing and Care Staff
- Supplies Staff
- Orthopaedic Units
- Occupational Therapists
- Physiotherapists
- Social Care Staff
- Community Care Staff
- Loan Store Managers

Boards/Trusts should ensure that if appropriate, this information is passed to all persons having the responsibility for the premises registered under "THE REGISTERED HOMES (NI) ORDER 1992.

SAFETY

NOTICE

ACTION

Staff responsible for the supply, use and maintenance of Rollators should ensure regular inspection and maintenance is carried out in accordance with the supplier/manufacturer's instructions, in particular:

- Inspect the central locking mechanism regularly to ensure it is operating correctly, and is not loose, and that no fasteners are loose or missing so that the bars of the central locking mechanism are secure. If found to be loose, the Rollator should be taken out of service.
- All the fasteners (screws, nuts and bolts) on the Rollator should be regularly checked to ensure they are securely tightened.
- Ensure that the hand operated **cable brakes** have been adjusted.
- Ensure that **locking handles**, which lock the height adjustable handles in position, are sufficiently tightened. Loose locking handle(s) will cause the handle bars to be insecure and consequently the Rollator to become unstable.
- Check that the **front castor wheel** swivels freely. If it does not, withdraw the walker from use.
- In following the above guidance, if the Rollator is found to be faulty the supplier or the manufacturer should be contacted for the appropriate corrective action or repair details.

BACKGROUND

NIAIC has received incident reports of patients falling because the central locking mechanism on the Rollator has failed. The locking mechanism is used to keep the Rollator "open" during use. The screw holding the central plastic locking mechanism together had worked loose causing the Rollator to collapse.

ENQUIRIES

Enquires to NIAIC should quote the reference number SN(NI) 2001/23 and be addressed to:

Northern Ireland Adverse Incident Centre (NIAIC)
Health Estates
Estate Policy
Stoney Road
Dundonald
Belfast BT16 1US

Marked for the attention of Mr Brian Godfrey

Tel: 02890 523714
Fax: 02890 523900
Email: brian.godfrey@dhsspsni.gov.uk

Brian Godfrey
NIAIC Manager

HOW TO REPORT ADVERSE INCIDENTS

Adverse Incidents relating to medical devices, non-medical equipment, plant and buildings should be reported to NIAIC as soon as possible. Advice on how to report is given in Safety Notice SN (NI) 2001/01. If you are in doubt about how to report incidents, please speak to your liaison officer or contact NIAIC using the telephone number provided.

*Heath Estates is an Executive Agency of the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety
Áisíneacht Feidhmeannach don Roinn Sláinte. Serbhístí Sóisialta agus Sábháilteacht Phoiblí*



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