

**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:**

**ELECTRICALLY OPERATED LIFT AND  
RECLINER CHAIRS**

**MANUFACTURER/SUPPLIER**

Various

**PROBLEM**

Risk of injury to patients or clients with cognitive and/or physical impairment, from using electrically operated lift and recliner chairs.

**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
- Device Managers
- Estates Managers
- Nurse Directors
- Nursing and Care Staff
- Stores and Supplies Staff
- Occupational Therapists
- Physiotherapists
- Disability Service Centres
- General Medical Practitioners
- Social Care Staff
- Community Care Staff
- Residential & Nursing Homes
- Day Centres
- Hospices

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.

**ACTION**

Anyone involved in the prescription, provision and use of electrically operated lift and recliner chairs must warn all users, including private users and carers, of the risk of injury and entrapment to the occupants' legs when adjusting the chair.

NIAIC endorses the Medical Devices Agency (MDA) recommended actions as follows:

- Ensure that a documented risk assessment for the use of these chairs is carried out prior to use. This should include an assessment of the user's ability to fully understand how to use the chair safely. If this assessment raises doubts an Occupational Therapist should be consulted.
- Ensure carers/users understand the need for users' legs to be on the leg-rest prior to and during any lift /recline action.
- Ensure that users are still able to operate the chair safely if their legs are covered by a blanket.
- Consider the need for only the carer to have access to the hand control.
- Ensure that the manufacturer's instructions for use and any additional user guidance are available and followed at all times.
- Establish the ownership of the chair and who is responsible for the maintenance and servicing.

**SAFETY**

**NOTICE**

## BACKGROUND

NIAIC has been informed by the MDA of three incidents resulting in serious leg injuries to users whilst operating their electrically powered lift and recliner chairs. In all cases those injured were suffering from cognitive and physical impairment and had been operating the chairs themselves. Due to their impairment they had, whilst seated, inadvertently placed their legs at the side of the "scissor-type mechanism" of the leg-rest, under the front of the leg-rest, or between the leg-rest and the chair cushion whilst the chair was moving.

NIAIC has been informed of one incident involving an electrically powered chair resulting in leg injuries to the user.

NIAIC previously published guidance SN(NI)2000/33, dated 9 October 2000, entitled "Electrically Operated Lift and Recliner Chairs - Risk of Entrapment of children in the mechanism of electrically operated lift and recliner chairs" is still relevant.

## ENQUIRIES

Enquires to the NIAIC should quote the reference number SN(NI) 2002/33 and be addressed to:

Northern Ireland Adverse Incident Centre (NIAIC)  
Health Estates  
Estate Policy Directorate  
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](mailto:brian.godfrey@dhsspsni.gov.uk)

Brian Godfrey  
NIAIC Manager



**NORTHERN  
IRELAND  
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**SAFETY**

**NOTICE**

### 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) 2002/01. If you are in doubt about how to report incidents, please speak to your liaison officer or contact NIAIC using the telephone number provided. Adverse Incident reporting forms and an on-line reporting facility are available on the NIAIC website at [www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/niaic](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/niaic)

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