



**Home Health Aide On-the-Go In-Service Lessons:
Vol. 2, Issue 11: Preventing Workplace Injuries
(Home Health Aide on-the-Go in-Service Lessons,
Volume 2)**

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This lesson on Preventing Workplace Injuries includes a complete training packet. Each in-service packet takes approximately one hour to complete and fully meets the Medicare in-service training requirements. As aides need training, you can make as many copies as you want - thereu2019s no restriction when used with aides assigned from your office location. Remember that Home Health Aides must have 12 hours of in-service training every year. LESSON OBJECTIVES Upon completion of this program, the home health aide will be able to:

- Name the injury most common among home health aides.
- List three precautions to help prevent self-injury when lifting or transferring patients.
- Name two areas outside the patientsu2019 homes where workplace injuries are common for home health aides.

OVERVIEW The incidence of workplace injuries is very high among home health workers in general and home health aides in particular. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that one in ten home health aides has a work-related illness or injury every year. The resulting absences from work due to injury usually last from one to two weeks. There are shortages of home health aides throughout the United States and time lost from work by aides is troublesome and expensive for homecare agencies. In addition to the loss of worker productivity, the agency is also responsible for paying for medical expenses through its Workersu2019 Compensation Plan. Overall, the injury rate for homecare aides exceeds the injury rate for similar workers in hospitals by 50 percent, and is 70 percent higher than the national average for private industry workers. It is not surprising that there are more frequent work-related injuries in home health for two primary reasons - there is far less control over the environment, and homecare workers travel from place to place either by car or public transportation throughout the work day. The home health aide may encounter a workplace environment that includes hostile animals, rotting steps, uneven floors, and clutter and then may have to brave inclement weather while juggling supplies and papers. The incidence of highway accidents is much higher among homecare workers than other types of health care workers. (Injuries that occur when commuting prior to the start of the workday or after it ends are not counted as work-related injuries.) The injury most common to home health aides is over-exertion, notably while lifting and transferring patients. Other common injuries include body actions such as over-reaching, twisting, or losing balance without falling. Many injuries occurring in the workplace can be prevented. The purpose of this in-service program is to provide information about injuries common to home health aides and to give measures that the aides can undertake to prevent or reduce them.

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