



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES
Aging and Long-Term Support Administration
PO Box 45600, Olympia, WA 98504-5600

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AL TSA: ALF #2016-020

CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING THE SELECTION & USE OF LANYARDS

Dear Assisted Living Facility Administrator:

We are partnering with you for the safe use of lanyards, such as those that house a pendant-type call or alert system, keys or identification cards. "Breakaway" lanyards, which are intended to release when pulled or pressure is applied, are most commonly used as a safety precaution.

Residents should be assessed to determine their potential for risks related to lanyards, including cognitive status, ambulatory status, level of independence, and healthcare provider recommendation in determining which type of device is most appropriate.

Resident rights and choice must be balanced with associated risk. The risks of non-breakaway lanyards are greatest for those residents who use wheelchairs, walkers or beds with rails. Please be aware of the potential that exists for asphyxiation should the lanyard become tangled. Family members and friends should be made aware of the hazards associated with use of decorative non-breakaway lanyards (e.g. bearing the colors or logo of a favorite sports team) and the importance of informing staff when supplying one to a resident.

There are many considerations around the selection and use of lanyards, including options that do not encompass the neck or head, such as wrist bands or clothing clips. When selecting pendant-type lanyards, consider the style, design, material, clasp type, and life of the mechanism, as well as the manufacturer's recommendations.

Recognizing that pendant-type call lights provide critical and immediate access to emergency care for those at risk of falls or who may be more likely to need outside assistance, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has stated, "...while the number of adverse events reported is small compared to the number of people who use these devices, the severity of these events is of concern."

If you have any questions, please contact your local RCS Field Manager. Thank you for your continued commitment to the safety and care of Washington State's vulnerable population.

Sincerely,

Candace Goehring, Director
Residential Care Services

"Transforming Lives"