

NIOSH Occupational Hazards in Home Healthcare



Home healthcare workers while contributing greatly to the wellbeing of others face unique risks on the job to their own personal safety and health. During 2007 alone, 27,400 recorded injuries occurred among more than 896,800 home healthcare workers. Home healthcare workers are frequently exposed to a variety of potentially serious or even life-threatening hazards. These dangers include overexertion; stress; guns and other weapons; illegal drugs; verbal abuse and other forms of violence in the home or community; bloodborne pathogens; needlesticks; latex sensitivity; temperature extremes; unhygienic conditions, including lack of water, unclean or hostile animals, and animal waste. Long commutes from worksite to worksite also expose the home healthcare worker to transportation-related risks.

This document aims to raise awareness and increase understanding of the safety and health risks involved in home healthcare and suggests prevention strategies to reduce the number of injuries, illnesses, and fatalities that too frequently occur among workers in this industry.