



Could Reducing Employee Injury Be This Simple?

By Wendy D'Alessandro

Safety first. Always. That's why organizations have risk management programs and safety committees focusing on training and prevention. Despite our industry's good-faith effort, workers in nursing and residential care facilities continue to experience some of the highest injury rates of any occupational industry.

Front-line care workers – nursing assistants, specifically – are the hardest hit.

The [Bureau of Labor of Statistics](#) reports:

- Nursing assistants are injured 3x more often than the average worker
- More than 35,000 back and other injuries among nursing staff each year are severe enough to miss work
- Nursing assistants are injured more than any other occupation, followed by warehouse workers, truckers, stock clerks and registered nurses

Many of these injuries are caused by moving patients or reaching, lifting, bending, twisting, often in awkward positions during shifts that last 8-12 hours.

How to Prevent Workplace Injuries

Training, prevention, and providing tools such as mechanical lifting equipment and re-positioning aids, can help prevent injury. So can selecting the right dining chairs and tables for your residents, says Randy Schellenberg, CEO of [ComforTek](#), a Senior Housing Forum partner that provides seating solutions for senior living and long-term care communities.

Does your dining room furniture help or hurt?

It's not unusual for residents to hold on to caregivers for physical support when moving from their walkers or wheelchairs to their dining chairs. Nor is it uncommon for caregivers to use their physical strength to hold a dining chair in place so the resident can safely transfer himself to the chair or "put their back into it" when pushing a resident's chair closer to the table. All of these instances, Randy explains, puts caregivers at risk for the upper body musculoskeletal and lower back injuries often reported by front-line workers in long-term care facilities.

Designed for Safety

[ComforTek Titan Series](#) of dining chairs moves this physical burden from the body of a caregiver to a chair's mechanical lever / swivel plate, both durable enough to accommodate a 400-pound guest. The following chair features make it easier and safer for caregivers to care for residents:

- The swivel feature lets residents access the chair without the caregiver having to move the chair to the required angle.
- The chair wheels lock so residents can lean on the chair – not the caregiver – for support while taking a seat.
- The chair's wheels allow caregivers to push seated residents closer to the table without having to use a lot of physical strength.

"Our products are designed to make the caregiver's job easier and therefore, safer," says Randy. "This translates into a more positive experience for residents and fewer workplace injuries."

The Evolution of Dining Furniture

Once selected for comfort, design, and functionality for residents, dining furniture has earned its place as a tool that can help reduce injury, increase staff retention, and improve resident experience. The benefits, Randy says, are far-reaching, long-lasting, and priceless.

Visit ComforTek at LeadingAge PA Oct. 28-31 at Booth #1234/1236

See and experience for yourself the ease with which caregivers can operate dining furniture designed for residents with limited mobility and who need assistance.



This article has been brought to you by [ComforTek](#) in partnership with [Senior Housing Forum](#).