

Aged Care Equipment Risk Alert

Help your clients avoid the incidents that should never happen.



What impact would this incident have had on your Aged Care clients?

A recent fatal incident in a Victorian Aged Care facility shows how poor equipment governance and maintenance can lead to catastrophic harm. This highlights the need for Aged Care providers to actively manage equipment safety risks through strong governance, maintenance and assurance.

Key Investigation Findings

A resident died after a reclining chair collapsed during use. Investigations found that the provider failed to implement and maintain basic equipment safety controls. This resulted in the provider being fined \$230,000.

The State WorkCover authority identified that the provider:

- Did not carry out regular safety or functionality checks
- Did not implement a preventive maintenance program
- Failed to tag or formally identify equipment as assets

Effective risk management, routine inspection and preventive maintenance may have prevented this incident.

Obligations and Penalties

Equipment safety in Aged Care is a core board-level accountability.

Under the Aged Care Act 2024, providers must ensure:

- Equipment remains safe and suitable
- Incidents are promptly reported, and any trends are analysed and acted upon

Boards must exercise active oversight and receive regular data and insights on risks to safety systems, equipment, and impacts on residents and staff. Non-compliance attracts penalties and strong regulatory scrutiny. WorkSafe and WorkCover authorities in each state are responsible for regulating and enforcing WHS laws, including ensuring that employers have appropriate systems in place for the safe use and maintenance of equipment.

Insurance implications also apply to failure to respond to the equipment maintenance. Providers should discuss these implications with their insurance broker to understand obligations and exposures.



Beyond the human impact, these incidents can trigger regulatory action, significant liability claims, and reputational damage. Under the **Aged Care Act 2024**, providers must demonstrate effective governance and control of safety risks.

Strengthening Equipment Safety Risk Management

As a broker, you can proactively help your clients identify and address equipment safety gaps before they result in harm, regulatory action, or significant claims.

Equipment safety is not just about maintenance alone. An effective risk approach actively:



- Identifies risks early
- Confirms controls are working as intended
- Gives Boards confidence that harm is being prevented and insurance exposures are reduced

Use the questions below to initiate discussions using the checklist provided to help identify practical steps that clients can implement to strengthen their risk management processes.

Equipment Safety Checklist for Aged Care

The next incident doesn't have to happen. Help your clients prevent it.

GOVERNANCE (Board oversight, accountability, assurance and risk management)

Weak governance increases exposure under the Aged Care Act 2024 and can undermine insurer confidence, claims defensibility and coverage terms. **Ask your client:**

- Does the Board receive regular reporting on equipment safety risks, incidents and trends?
- Is equipment safety part of the organisation's risk management framework?
- Are equipment failures and near misses reviewed to identify systemic or recurring issues?
- Is there clear executive accountability for equipment safety and asset management?
- Are equipment incidents and trends reported to senior leadership or the Board?
- Are equipment safety systems periodically reviewed through internal audit or independent assurance?
- Have governance controls been tested to confirm they work in practice?
- Are corrective actions from reviews or audits tracked through to completion?



PROCESSES (How equipment safety is managed day to day)

Process failures frequently feature in preventable harm liability claims and regulator investigations. Gaps in these areas may directly affect policy response. **Ask your client:**

- Is a current asset register maintained for all care equipment?
- Are new equipment purchases added to the asset register?
- Is there a documented preventive maintenance program for all equipment?
- Do maintenance schedules match manufacturer recommendations?
- Is responsibility clearly assigned for monitoring maintenance compliance?
- How are missed or overdue inspections escalated?
- Are routine equipment safety checks performed by staff who use the equipment?
- Are equipment faults reported immediately and consistently?
- Is faulty equipment removed from use until repaired?
- Are repairs documented and verified before returning equipment to use?
- Are equipment incidents and near misses formally recorded?
- Are investigations conducted to identify causes?
- Are findings from investigations used to improve systems, maintenance or training?

RESOURCES (People, training, equipment and capability to manage risk)

Strong processes fail without adequate resourcing and skilled staff. Insurers are increasingly assessing training evidence and operational capability. **Ask your client:**

- Is each item of care equipment tagged or uniquely identified?
- Are staff trained and provided ongoing training in the safe use of resident care equipment?
- Are equipment safety procedures and training documented and regularly refreshed?
- Do new staff receive equipment safety training at induction?
- Are staff aware of procedures for isolating unsafe equipment?
- Do staff know how and whom to report equipment faults to?



TIP for Brokers

If an Aged Care provider cannot clearly demonstrate:

- An asset register
- Preventive maintenance schedules
- Incident tracking
- Board oversight

There may be significant safety and insurance risks requiring further review.

Schedule a **15-minute equipment safety check-in** with your key Aged Care clients.

A simple conversation now may improve the safety of their maintenance programs and the people they are responsible for.



Final Message

Equipment safety failures are preventable. Strong governance, effective assurance and informed broker involvement enable Aged Care providers to protect residents, meet regulatory obligations and reduce insurance risk.

Boards and senior leaders must ensure preventive maintenance occurs, staff remain trained and competent, reporting remains timely and reliable, and governance forums routinely review equipment risks.

Safe, well-maintained equipment protects residents, staff and governing bodies from avoidable harm - and is a fundamental expectation in today's regulatory environment. Brokers strengthen this assurance by identifying gaps, advising on insurer expectations and guiding clients to stronger maintenance, reporting and governance.

USEFUL RESOURCES

- **WorkSafe Victoria** – Aged care chair failure case summary

<https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/news/2025-12/hospital-fined-230000-after-aged-care-chair-failure>

- **Aged Care Quality & Safety Commission** – Preventing Equipment Failures

<https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/news-publications/clinical-alerts/preventing-equipment-failures>

How We Can Help

Our Risk Solutions team provide practical risk support to help aged care providers protect what matters most.

With deep experience in Australian aged care, we tailor risk programs to each organisation's size, context, and maturity. We go beyond compliance by strengthening risk across governance, operations, and frontline care.

A person-centred approach connects risk management to care quality, supporting stronger outcomes for residents, improved organisational performance, and increased insurer confidence.

To support this approach, our Risk Toolkits provide easy-to-use resources that help aged care providers identify, understand, and manage everyday risks - making it easier to embed effective risk management across your organisation.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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