

# BED RAILS

The use of bed rails is associated with an increased risk of preventable harm and death for nursing home residents. Residents' attempts to leave their bed by going around or through the bed rail can lead to falls or entrapment, which occurs when a resident becomes caught in the bed rail or between the mattress and the bed rail.

## Standards of Care

- **Bed Rails.** Nursing homes must try to use an appropriate alternative first. If bed rails are used, nursing homes must assess the resident for associated risks, obtain the resident's informed consent, and ensure proper use and maintenance.
- **Resident Beds.** Nursing homes must regularly inspect bed frames, mattresses, and bed rails to identify the potential for resident entrapment.
- **Informed consent.** Nursing homes must provide residents or their representatives with the information they need to make an informed decision about the use of bed rails. Informed consent must be based on information that is presented in a manner that the resident or representative understands, free from coercion.

## Resources

1. LTCCC's website has the federal Guidance related to the use of bed rails. See <http://nursinghome411.org/cms-guidance-nursing-home-bed-rails/>.
2. The CMS State Operations Manual provides, in an appendix, the Interpretative Guidance, which specifies expectations for nursing home services and state enforcement. See [https://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Guidance/Manuals/downloads/som107ap\\_pp\\_guidelines\\_ltcf.pdf](https://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Guidance/Manuals/downloads/som107ap_pp_guidelines_ltcf.pdf).
3. The Learning Center on LTCCC's website, [www.nursinghome411.org](http://www.nursinghome411.org), contains easy-to-use fact sheets on many of the nursing home standards of care most relevant to residents, including one on bed rails. See <https://nursinghome411.org/lccc-issue-alert-bed-rails/>.