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Aged care safety audit

SafeWork SA inspectors are set to audit residential aged care facilities in an effort to reduce the risk of worker injuries caused by manual handling tasks.

The campaign will run in June and July and will ensure compliance with work health and safety legislation, as well as checking measures required to control the risks associated with resident handling.

This is a routine audit of manual handling procedures, as part of SafeWork SA's regular work as South Australia's workplace safety regulator.

It was planned some months ago and is in no way connected to the recent report of the Chief Psychiatrist into the Oakden Older Persons Mental Health Facility.

More than half of manual handling injuries in residential aged care facilities happen when nurses and carers move residents.

SafeWork SA Acting Executive Director Dini Soulio said the audit, to be conducted by the organisation's regulator arm, was one of many to occur each year.

"These initiatives are in addition to the reactive work inspectors carry out every day in response to notifications and incidents," Mr Soulio said.

"The inspectors will be looking at a range of things in the aged care sector, including resident aids and equipment, systems for assessing residents for mobility aids and environmental factors such as building access. They will also be checking that there are appropriate injury reporting mechanisms for nurses, carers and others involved in the care of residents and that, in an overall sense, there is a 'safety first' workplace culture.

"The audit will determine whether safe systems of work are in place and that they are reviewed regularly so the risk of manual handling injuries is eliminated or reduced."

The Australian Government has estimated that the number of aged care workers in Australia will increase from 352 100 in 2012 to 827 100 in 2050.

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 8204 9430 or 0401 122 329  media.safework@sa.gov.au

 safework.sa.gov.au  @safeworksa  @safeworksa