

Policy Guidance on Best Practices for Body Checks

This policy guidance was created by the New York State Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs as a resource for provider agencies. It does not address every scenario that could occur and does not constitute legal advice. It is intended for use as a guide that may be modified as needed. Agencies should also make sure policies include or address the specific considerations noted below.

Training

- ▶ Establish staff training requirements for how and when to complete body checks.
- ▶ Establish skill-based sensitivity training requirements for staff.
- ▶ Require staff training on plans of care that include body check requirements.
- ▶ Identify mechanisms for training all staff, including float or relief staff, on plans of care to ensure they are completed as required.
- ▶ Include training requirements of recognizing and reporting abuse and neglect.
- ▶ Emphasize privacy and respect for people receiving services during the body check process.

Supports and Safeguards

- ▶ Require body check requirements to be included in plans of care.
- ▶ Require body checks after situational events such as restraints, elopement, falls, before and after home visits, upon discharge from a hospital, nursing home, rehabilitation facility, upon admission, etc.
- ▶ Provide guidance regarding the ability for a person receiving services to consent to or refuse a body check.
- ▶ Identify when marks or injuries found during body checks require medical attention or reporting to the Justice Center.

- ▶ List requirements or limitations to photograph marks or injuries and use of agency equipment to take or transmit photos.
- ▶ Require two people whenever possible to complete body checks.
- ▶ Identify how often body check documentation will be reviewed to identify any concerns or systemic issues.
- ▶ Note who is responsible for reviewing body check documentation.

Body Check Forms

- ▶ Structured to record the documentation of checks until marks and injuries are healed or resolved.
- ▶ Reflect whether the body check is a whole body or partial body check.
- ▶ Require a manager or nursing review.
- ▶ Require printed staff names in addition to staff signatures.
- ▶ Include space for staff and nursing to write a free narrative of any marks or injuries found.
- ▶ Are maintained in an organized and easily accessible manner.