Portable Floor Lift Safe Work Practice

How to use a Mechanical Floor Lift (Disclaimer: See specific instructions for the floor lift(s) on your unit):

1. Before starting, ensure a second staff member is available.
2. Ensure there is a clear path between the surfaces you are transferring (e.g. bed to chair) and enough room to manoeuvre the lift.
3. Identify the appropriate sling as per the sling safe work practice (also known as the instructions on proper sling sizing). If the proper sized sling is not used, there is an increased risk of pinching the patient or the patient falling through the sling and being injured.
4. Inspect sling for any signs of wear and tear. If there are, DO NOT use. It must be removed from service and replaced.
5. Inspect sling for tag with size and weight limit. If it is not present or legible, DO NOT use the sling. It must be removed from service and replaced.

For the rest of the instructions, remember to involve the patient by letting them know what you are doing BEFORE you do it.

6. If transferring from the bed, adjust bed to appropriate height to promote good body mechanics. Appropriate height is approximately waist height.
7. Place sling behind patient using appropriate technique, equipment, and body mechanics. (e.g. Roll technique or slider sheets with unravelling technique).
8. Move the spreader bars over the patient's chest/torso, perpendicular to their shoulders.
   a. Widen the base of the lift (legs), if possible.
      
      Note: Floor lift support legs may have a manual or motorized mechanism for widening/narrowing the base of support. Manual mechanisms for controlling the legs only allow the legs to be in a fully widened (open) or narrow (closed) position while motorized allows for various increments between the widest and narrowest position. Wider leg position is recommended except when space does not allow (such as passing through doorways, or under beds with limitations to the space underneath). With manual mechanisms there is a risk of the legs snapping shut during a lift if space is limited.

9. Lock the brakes of the lift. Attach strap loops and remember the indications/contraindications from the sling safe work practice.
   a. Long loops for the leg straps.
   b. Shoulder and waist loops should be the same colour.
      i. Use the shorter loop for bed to wheelchair.
      ii. Use the longer loop for wheelchair to bed.
10. Have the patient cross their arms across their chest to ensure the patient’s arms are inside the sling straps to avoid entrapment.

11. Ensure the brakes of the mechanical lift are **unlocked**.

12. Lower the bed so that it is the same height as the surface you are going to/coming from (e.g. seat of wheelchair).
   a. Note: This is **if the bed frame to floor clearance will permit**. There must be enough room to get the lift out for floor model lifts.

13. Press the up button to raise the patient until there is tension in the straps.
   Note: **The lift may move to centre itself** over the patient. This is normal and why the brakes are unlocked.

14. Check to ensure sling is fitting and secure as per the sling safe work practice. As mentioned in step 3, if the proper sized sling is not used, there is an increased risk of pinching the patient or the patient falling through the sling and being injured.

15. Continue to lift the patient so that they just clear the bed height.

16. When moving the patient from one surface to the other, keep the legs of the lift open to avoid the lift tipping, if space allows. **Disclaimer:** See manufacturer's instructions to verify with that specific lift.

17. Move the lift the shortest distance to the next surface. **DO NOT** transport the patient in the lift.
   Note: Refer to the sling safe work practice for further information on lifting and lowering into/out of bed, chair, wheelchair, commode, toilet, etc.

18. When the patient is above the desired point of transfer, press the down button.
   Note: **DO NOT** pull on the sling. This could cause the lift to tip and/or fall. Hold the sling only to prevent the patient from rotating.

19. When transferring to a wheelchair or commode a second staff member will ensure the wheelchair wheels are locked.

20. When the chair has the patient’s weight, lower the spreader bar and walk the mechanical lift back to ensure the crossbar and spreader bars do not strike the patient.

21. Once the patient has been lowered and there is enough slack in the straps, remove the loops from the spreader bars.

22. Back the lift away from the patient.

23. Narrow the base of the lift (legs), if applicable. Lock the brakes when you are storing the lift.

24. Remove sling, using proper technique, equipment, and body mechanics.

25. Plug in mechanical lift when not in use (follow manufacturer's directions).