

## FALLS SEVERITY GRADING OF INJURY

### Introduction

A fall is defined as an event, which results in a person coming to rest inadvertently on the ground or floor or other lower level. (WHO, 2021). This includes near miss events where a person is assisted to the ground.

Grading the severity of harm to a person from a fall incident can be a challenge for reporters. The aim of this document is to provide additional guidance for staff when using the HSC regional risk matrix to grade the severity of harm following a fall. Examples provided are not exhaustive nor should be substituted for clinical decisions and **each case should be dealt with on an individual basis.**

### FALLS Severity Grading of Injury

DOMAIN	INSIGNIFICANT	MINOR	MODERATE	MAJOR	CATASTROPHIC
<b>PEOPLE</b>  (Impact on the Health / Safety / Welfare of any person affected: e.g. Patient / Service User, Staff, Visitor, Contractor)	The fall has resulted in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b><u>No injury or harm</u></b></li> </ul> This includes near miss events where staff are required to lower the person to the ground	The fall has resulted in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b><u>Short-term injury / minor harm</u></b> requiring first aid / medical treatment.</li> <li>The person may require extra observation or minor treatment post fall.</li> <li>The fall incident has resulted in non-permanent harm lasting less than a month.</li> <li>The person may be admitted to hospital for investigations and observation or have their stay extended (1-4 days duration).</li> <li>The fall may result in emotional distress. Recovery is expected within days or weeks.</li> </ul>	The fall has resulted in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Injuries causing <b><u>semi-permanent harm / disability</u></b>. (Consider physical / emotional injuries / trauma).</li> <li>A full recovery is expected within one year.</li> <li>Injuries have resulted in harm that requires a moderate increase in treatment and follow up</li> <li>The person may require a prolonged length of hospital stay or care provision (between 5 and 14 days).</li> </ul>	The fall has resulted in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>long-term permanent harm / permanent disability, i.e. the person is unlikely to regain their former level of independence.</li> <li>The person may require an increased length of hospital stay / care provision (&gt;14 days).</li> </ul>	The fall has resulted in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>death</li> <li>Falls resulting in death must be discussed with the coroner by the relevant medical practitioner.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>OR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The fall results in permanent harm / disability. This could be physical / emotional trauma which impacts on more than the person injured.</li> </ul> If the fall resulted in death, details recorded on death certificate should be recorded on the datix system, including coroner ref number, date and time of discussion and by whom.
<b>EXAMPLES OF POSSIBLE INJURIES</b>	Near miss, no injury or harm.	Minor cuts, abrasions or lacerations where a wound dressing or stitches may be required.	Fracture to wrist / fingers / toes; facial fractures. Surgery may or may not be required where falls result in moderate harm.	Intracranial bleed, fracture of long bones, fractured neck of femur (intracapsular / extracapsular), pelvis and ankle.	Spinal cord injuries, Catastrophic Brain Injuries. The person requires long term care / admission to a care facility beyond 1 year because of the fall.

**Details of injury sustained should be clearly recorded on the datix system.**

**If you are unsure about the Falls Severity Grading of injury, discuss with your appropriate Lead Nurse /Lead Midwife /Manager and refer to the Regional Risk Matrix.**