



NDIS Quality
and Safeguards
Commission

Regulated restrictive practice sub-type definitions

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Purpose and scope

The *NDIS (Restrictive Practices and Behaviour Support) Rules 2018* outline five kinds of regulated restrictive practices: chemical restraint, environmental restraint, mechanical restraint, physical restraint, and seclusion. For the purposes of data collection, analysis, and reporting, regulated restrictive practices are often further categorised into sub-types.

This document provides the data definitions for these sub-types, as adopted by the NDIS Commission. These definitions were developed in consultation with the state and territory restrictive practice authorisation bodies.

Regulated restrictive practices must only be used as a last resort, be the least restrictive option available, be proportionate to the risk of harm, reduce that risk to the person or others, and be used for the shortest possible time. Regulated restrictive practices must be authorised (where required by the state or territory) and clearly outlined in a behaviour support plan, alongside proactive, person-centred and evidence-informed supports that maximise independence, dignity and quality of life.

NDIS providers are required to use these data definitions when lodging behaviour support plans that contain regulated restrictive practices, and when reporting on the use of regulated restrictive practices in the NDIS Commission's Portal. This will support consistent data collection on restrictive practices.

Chemical restraint sub-types

Chemical restraint is “the use of medication or chemical substance for the primary purpose of influencing a person’s behaviour. It does not include the use of medication prescribed by a medical practitioner for the treatment of, or to enable treatment of, a diagnosed mental disorder, a physical illness or a physical condition.”

The key determining factor is the primary purpose for which the medication or chemical substance is used, noting that it should *only* ever be administered in accordance with the prescriber’s instructions.

Chemical restraint **sub-types** are recorded using the medication name, either the brand name (e.g., Risperdal) or active ingredient (e.g., risperidone).

Environmental restraint sub-types

Environmental restraint is any practice “which restricts a person’s free access to all parts of their environment, including items or activities.” It includes practices that are beyond ordinary community standards for the purpose of responding to behaviour that presents a risk of harm to the person or others.

In the case of children and young people, consideration must be given to whether the restriction is age appropriate, in line with community standards, and consistent with child safety and injury prevention practices that would be applied irrespective of whether the child or young person has a disability. Where this is the case, it would *not* be considered a regulated restrictive practice.

Where an environmental restraint could reasonably be classified as more than one environmental restraint sub-type, consideration should be given to the intent of the restriction and the behaviour or risk of harm that it is intended to address.

Environmental restraint **sub-types** include:

- Restricted access to activity
- Restricted access to alcohol
- Restricted access to cigarettes/vapes
- Restricted access to community
- Restricted access to electronic devices/internet
- Restricted access to finances
- Restricted access to food/drink
- Restricted access to household items
- Restricted access to object/item
- Restricted access to personal items/property
- Restricted access to places/venues
- Restricted access to room/area
- Restricted access to sharps
- Restricted access to specific people
- Environmental restraint – Other



Environmental restraint sub-type	Data definition
Restricted access to activity	Restricted access to an activity is when a person is prevented from freely participating in an activity they would ordinarily want to do or be able to do. It includes telling a person they are not permitted to participate in an activity, refusing to support their participation, or restricting their access to items required for the activity (e.g., restricting access to a cricket bat needed to play cricket).
Restricted access to alcohol	Restricted access to alcohol is when a person aged 18 years or over is prevented from buying, consuming or possessing alcohol. It also includes refusing to support a person to lawfully acquire or consume alcohol and when their access to alcohol is limited. Note: Some limitations are part of the responsible service of alcohol or are required under another relevant law, this is <i>not</i> considered an environmental restraint. These laws apply to all people. There are laws in some States and Territories that allow for alcohol-related conditions or restrictions in certain settings, such as boarding houses. These are <i>not</i> considered an environmental restraint.
Restricted access to cigarettes/vapes	Restricted access to cigarettes or vapes is when a person aged 18 years or over is prevented from buying, smoking or possessing cigarettes, nicotine, tobacco or vapes. It also includes refusing to support a person to lawfully acquire or smoke cigarettes or vapes, and when access to cigarettes or vapes is rationed, limited or controlled by others. Note: There are State and Territory laws about where people may smoke (e.g., smoking is prohibited on public transport, in vehicles with children, and may be restricted to certain areas under strata laws or other relevant laws.) These restrictions apply to all people and are <i>not</i> considered an environmental restraint.

Environmental restraint sub-type Data definition

Restricted access to community

Restricted access to the community is when a person is prevented from freely leaving their home or service environment to access the broader community and is required to remain on site *with* support workers or other people.

It includes preventing a person from going outside, leaving the property or accessing the community. This may be implemented by locking doors, gates, windows or using other barriers such as high fences. It also includes telling a person they are not permitted to leave, or refusing to support them to access the community. Surveillance technologies, such as alarms and security cameras, may also support the implementation of this restriction when the person is unable to freely exit or believes they cannot leave.

Note: the use of containment, as defined in Queensland legislation (i.e., physically preventing free exit from the premises other than by secluding the adult) can be reported under this sub-type.

Restricted access to electronic devices/internet

Restricted access to electronic devices or the internet is when a person is prevented from freely accessing electronic devices or online / media content. This may include restricting access to devices such as iPads, laptops, mobile phones, gaming consoles, the internet or music, movies or games of a particular classification. It may be implemented by locking devices in a drawer or cupboard, placing them out of reach or by blocking access to specific websites or the internet. It may also include telling a person they are not permitted to use a device or the internet, or refusing to support their use.

Note: the removal of a person's communication device may constitute abuse.

Environmental restraint sub-type	Data definition
Restricted access to finances	Restricted access to finances is when a person is prevented from freely accessing, holding or spending their own money. It may be implemented by locking a person's cash, bank card or deposit book in a cupboard or drawer. It may also include telling a person they are not permitted to spend their money on certain items, or refusing to support them to spend their own money. Note: A financial guardian or administrator exercising their legally appointed function is <i>not</i> considered environmental restraint.
Restricted access to food/drink	Restricted access to food or drink is when a person is prevented from freely accessing specific food or drinks. It may be implemented by locking fridges, freezers, cupboards or placing them out of reach. It may also include telling a person they are not permitted to have certain food or drink, or refusing to support them to access food or drinks of their choice.
Restricted access to household items	Restricted access to household items is when a person is prevented from freely accessing specific household items, such as cables, cords, utilities (gas/water), household chemicals or remote controls. It includes removing items, reducing access or controlling when and how the items can be used. It may be implemented by using stove knob covers, latches or locks, securing items in place or closed, storing them in a locked cupboard or placing them out of reach. It may also include telling a person they are not permitted to use the household items, or refusing to support their use.

Environmental restraint sub-type	Data definition
Restricted access to object/item	Restricted access to an object or item is when a person is prevented from freely accessing any item or object that is not covered by, or does not meet the criteria for, restricted access to household items or personal items. It may be implemented by removing the item or object from the person, locking it in a drawer, cupboard or another room or placing it out of reach. It also includes when a person is actively seeking to access an object or item and is told they are not permitted to access it, or where support to use it is refused. Note: Where a provider is responsible for the safe administration of medication, storing that medication securely (for example, in a locked cupboard) is generally <i>not</i> considered an environmental restraint. However, where this restriction is in response to the person attempting to self-harm through the misuse of medication, this <i>would be</i> considered an environmental restraint.
Restricted access to personal items	Restricted access to personal items or property is when a person is prevented from freely accessing their own belongings. It may be implemented by locking items in a drawer, cupboard or another room or placing them out of reach. It may also include telling a person they are not permitted to have or use a personal item, or refusing to support their use.
Restricted access to places/venues	Restricted access to places and venues is when a person is prevented from freely entering or attending a specific location or community facility that they would ordinarily be free to access. This may include shopping centres, licensed premises, playgrounds and other community venues. It may be implemented by preventing their access, telling a person they are not permitted to attend a place or venue, or refusing to support their access.

Environmental restraint sub-type	Data definition
Restricted access to room/area	Restricted access to a room or area is when a person is prevented from freely accessing part(s) of their environment that they should ordinarily be able to enter, such as a bedroom, kitchen or communal areas. It includes locking doors, gates or using other barriers. It also includes telling a person they are not permitted to access the area, or refusing to support them to access the space. Note: Some areas may be restricted due to their purpose, such as a staff room, a co-tenant's bedroom or an industrial kitchen or laundry. These spaces are used by workers and co-tenants and restricting entry without an invitation is <i>not</i> considered an environmental restraint.
Restricted access to sharps	Restricted access to sharps is when a person is prevented from freely accessing sharp objects such as scissors, knives or razors. It may be implemented by locking sharp items in a drawer or cupboard, securing them or placing them out of reach. It may also include telling a person they are not permitted to use sharp items, or refusing to support their use.
Restricted access to specific people	Restricted access to specific people is when a person's access to particular individuals or groups is restricted or limited. This may include situations where a person is prevented from seeing, communicating with, or interacting with a particular individual or a defined category of people. Note: a lawful order that prohibits a person from contacting, associating with, or approaching a protected person is <i>not</i> considered a regulated restrictive practice. However, where a provider enforces compliance with a lawful order, these actions may amount to the use of environmental restraint.
Environmental restraint – Other	Environmental restraint – Other can be used as a last resort for any form of environmental restraint that is not covered by, or does not meet the criteria for, the other listed sub-types. Details must be provided. Note: the use of detention as defined in Victorian legislation (i.e., physically locking a person in a premises AND constantly supervising or escorting them) can be reported under this sub-type.

Mechanical restraint sub-types

Mechanical restraint is “the use of a device to prevent, restrict, or subdue a person’s movement for the primary purpose of influencing a person’s behaviour but does not include the use of devices for therapeutic or non-behavioural purpose”.

Devices should be prescribed by an appropriately qualified health or allied health professional, meet relevant Australian safety standards and only be used for the purpose for which they were prescribed.

Where there is ambiguity about whether a practice constitutes mechanical restraint or environmental restraint, consideration should be given to what is restricted, being the person’s movement or their access to an item, activity, or area. Consideration should also be given to how the restriction is achieved, including whether a device or equipment is involved, or the restriction is applied to the environment.

Mechanical restraint **sub-types** include:

- Bed rails
- Belt
- Buckle cover (not safe transportation)
- Furniture
- Harness (not safe transportation)
- Protective headgear
- Restrictive clothing
- Safe sleeper/surround bed
- Splints
- Strap
- Mechanical restraint – Other

Mechanical restraint sub-type	Data definition
Bed rails	Bed rails are rails attached to, or built into, the side of a bed to prevent a person from falling or leaving the bed without support. When used as a mechanical restraint, their primary purpose is to influence the person’s behaviour. Note: Use of bedrails for therapeutic or non-behavioural purposes is <i>not</i> considered a mechanical restraint.

Mechanical restraint sub-type	Data definition
Belt	A belt is a device worn around a person's waist to restrict a person's movement. It may be made of leather or other strong materials, with or without padding. When used as a mechanical restraint, its primary purpose is to influence the person's behaviour. For example, this includes when a belt is used to prevent a person from removing their clothing, or when a wheelchair belt is used to prevent a person from freely exiting their chair. Note: Use of a belt (including a wheelchair belt or walk belt) for non-behavioural or therapeutic purposes such as positioning, postural support, or to assist with safe transfers is <i>not</i> considered a mechanical restraint. Seatbelts, seatbelt guards and buckle guards when used during transport are also not considered a regulated restrictive practice.
Buckle cover (not safe transportation)	A buckle cover (buckle guard or a seatbelt guard) is a device which prevents a person from undoing their belt. When used outside of transportation and for the primary purpose of influencing a person's behaviour, this constitutes mechanical restraint. Note: Use of a buckle cover or seat belt guard during transportation to ensure compliance with seatbelt laws is <i>not</i> considered a mechanical restraint. Its use for safe transportation is not dependent on whether a person displays behaviours of concern.
Furniture	Furniture refers to when objects such as beds, chairs and tables, including attachable table trays are used to restrict a person's movement. When used as a mechanical restraint, its primary purpose is to influence the person's behaviour. Note: Use of furniture in ordinary everyday activities for therapeutic or non-behavioural purposes is <i>not</i> considered a mechanical restraint.

Mechanical restraint sub-type	Data definition
Harness (not safe transportation)	A harness is a vest-like device, typically worn around the torso to restrict a person's movement by securing them to a chair, seat or to anchor points in a vehicle. When used as a mechanical restraint its primary purpose is to influence the person's behaviour. Note: Use of a harness for therapeutic or non-behavioural purposes such as postural support is <i>not</i> considered a mechanical restraint.
Protective headgear	Protective headgear is a helmet-like device, typically made of padded or impact-absorbing material, which is worn on a person's head. When used as a mechanical restraint its primary purpose is to influence the person's behaviour. For example, to reduce risk of harm from self-injury or head banging. Note: Use of protective headgear used for therapeutic or non-behavioural purposes such as for epilepsy, postural needs, medical treatment, or safety during contact sports is <i>not</i> considered a mechanical restraint. However, where a person has epilepsy and protective headgear is used for the primary purpose of influencing behaviour, this would be considered mechanical restraint.
Restrictive clothing	Restrictive clothing is any garment or item of clothing that, when worn, limits a person's freedom of movement. When used as a mechanical restraint, its primary purpose is to influence the person's behaviour. For example, restrictive clothing can include onesies, gloves or mittens. Note: Use of specialised clothing or footwear for therapeutic or non-behavioural purposes is <i>not</i> considered mechanical restraint. For example, gloves worn for warmth, food hygiene, personal safety during domestic tasks or for contact sports are not considered mechanical restraint.

Mechanical restraint sub-type	Data definition
Safe sleeper/surround bed	A safe sleeper or surround bed is a fully enclosed device or type of bed that prevents a person from exiting their bed. Common features of these beds are zips or locking systems that can only be opened from the outside, high walls made of either wooden rails or nylon mesh, and a mattress. Its primary purpose is to influence the person's behaviour.
Splints	A splint is a rigid or semi-rigid device that supports, restricts, or immobilises a limb or body part. When used as a mechanical restraint its primary purpose is to influence the person's behaviour. For example, to reduce risk of harm associated with hand or arm biting. Note: Use of a splint for therapeutic or non-behavioural purposes such as medical treatment or as an assistive device is <i>not</i> considered a mechanical restraint.
Strap	A strap is a strip of material, with or without padding, used to restrain part of a person body or restrict their movement. When used as a mechanical restraint its primary purpose is to influence the person's behaviour. Note: Use of ropes to tie hands or other body parts may constitute abuse.
Mechanical restraint – Other	Mechanical restraint – Other can be used as a last resort for any form of mechanical restraint that is not covered by, or does not meet the criteria for, the other listed sub-types. Details must be provided.

Physical restraint sub-types

Physical restraint is “the use or action of physical force to prevent, restrict or subdue movement of a person’s body, or part of their body, for the primary purpose of influencing their behaviour. Physical restraint does not include the use of a hands-on technique in a reflexive way to guide or redirect a person away from potential harm/injury, consistent with what could reasonably be considered the exercise of care towards a person”.

Supine, prone, pin-down, takedown techniques or basket-holds must *never* be used. These are considered practices that present a high risk of harm to NDIS participants. Physical restraints must not inhibit a person’s respiratory or digestive functioning, inflict pain, hyperextend joints or apply pressure to the chest or joints.

1:1 and 2:1 supervision or support are *not* considered physical restraint unless physical force is applied to move or hold the person due to behaviour that presents a risk of harm to the person or others.

Where there is ambiguity about whether a practice constitutes physical restraint or mechanical restraint, consideration should be given to how the restriction is achieved, including whether it is applied through direct physical force or using a device or equipment.

Physical restraint **sub-types** include:

- One-person physical escort
- One-person restraint
- Two-person physical escort
- Two-person restraint
- Physical restraint – Other

Physical restraint sub-type	Data definition
One-person physical escort	One-person physical escort is when a single person applies physical force to move another person from one location to another. When used as a physical restraint, its primary purpose is to influence the person’s behaviour by preventing, restricting or subduing their movement. Note: Physical guidance, hand-under-hand support with daily living skills or reflexively guiding or redirecting a person away from a busy road or potential harm is <i>not</i> considered physical restraint.

Physical restraint sub-type	Data definition
One-person restraint	One-person restraint is when a single person applies physical force to hold a person or part of their body to restrict or subdue their movement while remaining in a stationary position. It can include either standing or seated restraints. A restraint can include holding down one part of the body (e.g., holding down a person's hand) to multiple parts of the body. When used as a physical restraint, its primary purpose is to influence the person's behaviour by preventing, restricting or subduing their movement. Note: Physical guidance, hand-under-hand support with daily living skills or reflexively guiding or redirecting a person away from a busy road or potential harm is <i>not</i> considered physical restraint. Blocking or shielding a strike without applying force to the other person is <i>not</i> considered a physical restraint.
Two-person physical escort	Two-person physical escort is when two people stand on each side of a person and apply physical force to move another person from one location to another. When used as a physical restraint, its primary purpose is to influence the person's behaviour by preventing, restricting or subduing their movement.
Two-person restraint	Two-person restraint is when two people apply physical force to hold a person or part of their body to restrict or subdue their movement while remaining in a stationary position. It can include either standing or seated restraints. A restraint can include holding down one part of the body (e.g., holding down a person's hand) to multiple parts of the body. When used as a physical restraint, its primary purpose is to influence the person's behaviour by preventing, restricting or subduing their movement. Note: Blocking or shielding a strike without applying force to the other person is <i>not</i> considered a physical restraint.
Physical restraint – Other	Physical restraint – Other can be used as a last resort for any form of physical restraint that is not covered by, or does not meet the criteria for, the other listed sub-types. Details must be provided.

Seclusion sub-types

Seclusion is the “sole confinement of a person with disability in a room or a physical space at any hour of the day or night where voluntary exit is prevented, or not facilitated, or it is implied that voluntary exit is not permitted”.

In circumstances where the use of seclusion results in the denial of a person’s basic needs this may constitute abuse or neglect.

Where differentiating between seclusion and environmental restraint consideration should be given to whether the person is physically alone and unable to freely leave the space.

Seclusion **sub-types** include:

- Seclusion to setting or premises
- Seclusion to a room
- Seclusion to yard/outside
- Seclusion – Other

Seclusion restraint sub-type	Data definition
Seclusion to setting or premises	Seclusion to a setting or premises is when a person is alone inside a setting/premise and is prevented from freely exiting. It can occur in settings such as forensic disability units, aged care memory units, supported independent living (SIL) environments and group homes. It includes where locked doors, controlled entry and exit, perimeter barriers, constant supervision or surveillance monitoring are used to prevent free exit. Seclusion to a setting or premises also includes when staff withdraw to a staff room or other space due to an identified risk of harm and the person remains alone in the setting and unable to freely exit.

Seclusion restraint sub-type	Data definition
Seclusion to a room	Seclusion to a room is when a person is confined inside a room on their own and is prevented from freely exiting. It includes where the doors or windows are locked or when the person believes they cannot leave. Note: A person choosing to spend time in a room on their own for privacy or a specific activity is <i>not</i> considered seclusion.
Seclusion to yard/outside	Seclusion to yard or outside is when a person is confined to an outside location (e.g., yard) on their own and is prevented from freely exiting. It includes where doors or gates are locked to prevent exit or re-entry or when the person believes they cannot leave or re-enter. Note: A person choosing to spend time outside on their own for privacy or a specific activity is <i>not</i> considered seclusion. The miss-use of this practice could result in harm, abuse or neglect if used in inappropriate conditions, considering the time of day, weather conditions and the person's access to basic needs and facilities.
Seclusion – Other	Seclusion – Other can be used as a last resort for any form of seclusion that is not covered by, or does not meet the criteria for, the other listed sub-types. Details must be provided.

Where to get more information

- [Regulated Restrictive Practices Guide](#)
- [Regulated Restrictive Practices with Children and Young People with Disability: Practice Guide](#)
- [The Justice System and Lawful Orders: A guide for supporting people with disability](#)
- [Surveillance Technology Practice Guide](#)
- [Safe Transportation Practice Guide](#)