



Important information about Safe Bathing:

MONITORING OF HOT WATER

- Hot water temperatures should be tested and the results recorded at least weekly. Hot water temperature should not exceed 110 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Hot water temperatures should be tested at a time of day when the system has not been depleted, thus giving false low temperature readings. For example, in a residential setting, one could test the hot water temperature in the afternoon before individuals arrive home, assuming that laundry was not done during the day. In a day setting, an appropriate time to test would be in the morning before program participants arrive.
- In freestanding buildings, test hot water on every floor and in bathrooms in various parts of the building. The larger the building, the more sites should be tested. This is particularly true if the building has multiple hot water heater systems.
- In apartment settings, test every bathroom weekly; each bathroom may have its own mixing valve and the operation of each needs to be monitored.
- Always test hot water at a bathtub or shower spout as well as at a sink spout. The potential for serious injury is greatest in the bathing areas; readings have been known to vary from one spout to another even within one bathing area, due to variations in plumbing.
- When testing hot water, use a standard test thermometer that measures from 0 degrees to 220 degrees Fahrenheit. A candy thermometer may also be used. Do not use thermometers designed for use in a refrigerator or oven, or one for taking people's temperatures.
- When testing the hot water, turn on the hot-water faucet only. Hold the thermometer in such a way that the stem is in the stream of running water. The thermometer can also be put into a cup that is then filled continuously from the faucet.
- Keep the thermometer in the stream of water until the reading has been constant for 30 seconds.
- Staff should monitor hot water each time they supervise individuals in bathing/showering. If staff suspect that the hot water temperature is too high, they must take appropriate action.
- Some sites use "Scald Safes," which are mechanical devices that attach directly to faucets and shower spouts. These units are designed to interrupt the flow of water if the temperature exceeds a pre-set limit. These devices should be checked regularly to ensure that they are operating properly. These devices are not acceptable as the sole means of regulating hot water temperature, although they can be installed as a secondary back up device.
- Mixing valves can wear out and fail. Water temperature should be regularly tested, including at bath/shower time.
- Be mindful that flushing a toilet or using cold water anywhere else in the home can momentarily raise the water temperature in the shower. Take any necessary precautions.
- In all cases in which testing shows that the hot water temperature exceeds stated limits, the service provider must have a procedure to correct the problem expeditiously.

BATHING PROCEDURES

- Assess each person's need for bathing supervision and assistance. Make sure that this assessment is clear and that staff know each person's supervision needs. Be particularly aware of how a person's health care conditions can impact upon their need for supervision or assistance when bathing. Be particularly vigilant for people:
 - ✓ With a history of seizures
 - ✓ Who are taking sedation drugs
 - ✓ Who can't sit up without assistance
 - ✓ Who have difficulty getting in and out of tubs
 - ✓ Who have a history of falling
- Individuals who require constant supervision when bathing or showering should NEVER be left alone in the shower or tub.
- Showers are generally safer than tubs, particularly for people with seizure disorders.
- Extreme water temperatures increase the likelihood of seizures.
- Bathing times should be chosen to allow for needed supervision.
- BEFORE beginning the bathing process, make sure you have all the supplies that you will need, such as clothing, soap, shampoo and towels.
- Test hot water before the individual gets into the tub or shower. If the hot water feels too hot to your touch, IT IS PROBABLY TOO HOT FOR THE INDIVIDUAL'S BATH/SHOWER.
- Staff must be able to correctly operate all special tubs and bathing equipment. Specialty tubs generally have safety gauges; use them.
- Beware of drips from a tub spout; if the water is too hot and drips from a tub spout onto an individual's leg or foot, injury can result.
- If after bathing or showering, an individual has reddened skin, apply cool compresses and seek medical evaluation.



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