



STATE OF MARYLAND

DHMH

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
201 W. Preston Street • Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr., Governor - Arlene H. Stephenson, Acting Secretary

EDUCATIONAL ALERT !!!

TO: All DDA Service Providers

FROM: Diane K. Coughlin, Director *DKC*
Developmental Disabilities Administration

Carol Benner, Director *Carol*
Office of Health Care Quality

SUBJECT: Monitoring of water temperature to prevent the possibility of scalding or burns.

The Mortality Review Committee (MRC) was established by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) through legislation effective October 2001. The MRC evaluates causes or factors contributing to deaths of individuals in programs or facilities operated or licensed by the Developmental Disabilities Administration and the Mental Hygiene Administration.

The Mortality Review Committee (MRC) in their current annual report has identified the inappropriate monitoring and supervision of water temperatures during bathing as an issue. We are requesting your immediate attention to this concern.

- It is imperative that you develop and implement policies and procedures to prevent scalding or burns from hot tap water.
- Please ensure that any licensed site maintains a water temperature at a maximum of 110 degrees Fahrenheit, unless **each** individual living in the home or receiving services at the site is capable of regulating water temperature safely.
- If the individual is able to regulate water temperature safely, this must be documented in their individual plan.
- The following are some preventative measures, which can be implemented to prevent hot tap water scalding and burns.
 - Measure the temperature of the hot water at the tap.
 - The temperature on the hot water heater should not be set at greater than 110 degrees Fahrenheit.
 - Test the temperature of the bath water or shower water before allowing an individual who is unable to safely regulate water temperature in to the shower or the bath.
 - Closely supervise individuals who are unable to safely regulate water temperature when they are involved in or around activities that require the use of hot water.

Working together we can reduce avoidable injury and death. Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

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Web Site: www.dhmh.state.md.us