

SECTION: CLIENT SERVICES

TOPIC: SAFE BATHING AND SHOWERING

Intent: To maximize safe bathing and showering practices for individuals in service.

Individuals who require any support with their bathing and/or showering routine include (but are not limited to):

- Individuals with physical/mobility challenges who require assistance entering and exiting the bathtub
- Dependent individuals who require assistance in bathing
- Individuals with medical conditions which put them at risk for not feeling temperature quickly or have high pain thresholds (e.g. diabetes)
- Individuals with seizure disorders.

Individuals that require any support in the bathtub or shower, including assistance preparing a safe water temperature for their bath or shower, will have procedures written in their Profile. Individuals who are independent in bathing/showering (do not need any support with water temperature regulation, cleaning themselves, etc.) will have this clearly identified in their profile.

Any individual who requires assistance in the bathtub or shower can never be left alone (**not even for a second**) once they enter the bathroom for the safe bathing and showering routine, as there is potential for the individual to drown or be injured. To ensure the safety of these individuals, staff will follow the bathing and/or showering procedures outlined in each individual's profile. All necessary items (including a protective pillow or blanket) will be gathered and put into the washroom before commencing a bath or shower.

Written physician and guardian approval **MUST** be given for any temperatures outside the range of 36°C to 40°C and must be documented in the individual's profile and bathing and/or showering procedure.

*Gloves will NOT be worn when bathing or showering as it impedes the ability to sense the temperature of the water. Gloves will only be worn in rare circumstances which will be outlined in each individual's bathing procedure or applicable treatment plan.

For any individual in service who requires assistance with their showering or bathing routine, the following must be tended to:

To Prevent Scalding from Faucet Hot Water:

Staff assisting an individual with their bath or shower will carefully test the water temperature with their lower arm (inner wrist) and then take the water temperature with an agency issued probe thermometer *before the individual enters the bath or shower*. Staff will follow the agency's Safety Measures for Hot Water Bathing and Showering Procedures located in the home bathing binder and/or profile. **This needs to occur each time there is a bath or shower.**

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The water temperature for a bath or shower must be between 36° and 40°C.
DO NOT PROCEED WITH A BATH OR SHOWER IF THE TEMPERATURE IS NOT BETWEEN
36° and 40°C.
TEMPERATURES EXCEEDING 40°C INCREASE THE RISK OF SCALDS.

**If the employee believes that the water temperature feels hotter than the required temperature and believes there is a risk of scalding, the employee will not proceed. The Service Area Crisis Response Procedures will be followed. Crisis Response will test and compare the water temperature with the Crisis Response kit thermometer.

If the individual indicates (verbally or non-verbally) that the temperature of the water is too hot:

- The individual must be immediately removed from the bath or shower.
- The individual must be assessed for any skin redness (use the agency Scald/Burn Poster as a reference guide). If signs of scalding are present, support staff will call 911 immediately and follow the Service Area On-Call Procedures.
- If skin redness is noted call Health Link (as outlined in the poster) and follow their directions. An appropriate Supervisor (Office Level) must be notified immediately and directions/instructions will be provided regarding how to proceed in caring for the individual.
- If the skin shows no signs of redness the tub/water temperature shall be re-adjusted for the individual's comfort following the above mentioned procedure.

Should the individual identify that the temperature of the water is too cold:

- The individual must be immediately removed from the tub/shower.
- Steps shall be taken to provide for the individual's immediate comfort and safety e.g., wrap in a towel or bathrobe.
- The tub/water temperature shall be re-adjusted for the individual's comfort following the Safe Bathing/Showering Procedure.

It is important to remember that individuals must be removed from either the tub or shower BEFORE any adjustment of water temperature can be done.

The water temperature must be recorded on the *Hot Water Tracking for Baths & Showers* (located in the bathroom) prior to having the individual enter the bath or shower.

NOTE: Water temperature must also be tested and documented when giving sponge baths or hand/foot soaks, as outlined above and written into the individual's treatment plan and/or bathing profile.

1. Individuals who require assistance in the bathtub or shower in a home where there is more than one individual in service present in the home, must have a minimum of two staff on shift and present in the home when bathing or showering occurs (as individuals cannot be left alone during these routines) or the bathing/showering routine CANNOT be completed. If there is a need for an immediate cleanup and only one staff is available, a sponge bath on a blanket on the floor or their bed may be an alternate way of cleaning an individual's body.

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Staff will follow the Safety Measures for Hot Water Bathing and Showering when preparing the water for a sponge bath.

2. Individuals who like to play with water and turn on taps: Consider having child proof protectors on the taps, or a faucet pressure valve that regulates the temperature to a maximum of 40°C.
3. Individuals at risk of injuring themselves (banging or rocking) can be protected by having a soft cover on the faucet.
4. Preventing slips & falls: Each home will have non-slip mats in the tub or shower, and non-slip mats outside the tub or shower to catch drips.
5. Handrails on bathtub walls will be installed for any individuals with stability issues to help maintain their balance entering and leaving the bathtub/shower areas. Staff will assist individuals to use these rails. Many individuals use environmental interventions in the bathtub. Required equipment to support individuals in bathrooms will be assessed by a qualified professional and ordered by supervisors from the individual's home health care supplier. This may include bath chairs or benches, grab bars, etc....
6. Bathing procedures are reviewed annually at minimum. Changes to individual bathing procedures will be considered on an ongoing basis. Required changes will be submitted to the Client Safety Coordinator for review. The Client Safety Coordinator will review and ensure bathing/showering routines are updated as required.
7. All staff must successfully complete a bathing orientation and practicum prior to bathing/showering any individuals in service. This orientation and practicum is to be completed annually.
8. Office/Home Supervisors will observe and document staff practice in following the bathing procedures. Documentation will be completed on the document titled "SAFE BATHING AND SHOWERING TESTING PROCEDURE". Completed tests will be submitted to the Service Area Director.
9. If an individual has a history of seizure activity but is capable of completing a bathing/showering procedure independently, staff must remain in the immediate area (as defined in the profile) of the washroom to ensure the safety of the individual throughout the bathing/showering routine. Guardian and physician written approval must be obtained and renewed annually to permit the individual to bathe independently.
10. If an individual has a history of seizure activity (within the past 2 years), there must be a minimum of two (2) staff on shift and present in the home to complete a bathing/showering routine.
11. Bathing and showering procedures must be followed each time an individual in service takes a bath/shower. Any staff not following the safety measures identified above, or as outlined in an individual's profile, will receive disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

References:

Safe Bathing/Showering Procedure
Accreditation Standards
Individual Bathing Procedures