

STATE OF WISCONSIN
Department of Health Services
Division of Long Term Care

DLTC Info Memo Series 2014-01
Date: April 9, 2014
**Index Title: Medicaid Standards for Certified
1-2 Bed Adult Family Homes
Hot Water Temperatures**

To: Listserv

For: Family Care Managed Care Organizations
IRIS Consultant Agencies and Certification Agency
County Human Services Agencies

From: Brian Shoup
Administrator 

Subject: 1-2 Bed Adult Family Homes Hot Water Temperature Guidance

The purpose of this memo is to provide guidance on hot water temperatures for agencies certifying 1-2 Bed Adult Family Homes.

Background

Article V. C.6., 1-2 Bed Adult Family Home Standards, states that the Adult Family Home shall have adequate, safe and functioning mechanical systems. All systems shall be operated so that the Adult Family Home is comfortable for all residents and habitable at all times.

One of the dangers to which residents might be exposed is water that is too hot. The elderly and individuals with mental and physical disabilities may have neurological conditions that prevent instant recoil from hot water. Because they do not instantly react to water that is too hot, they are particularly at risk for injury. Hot water can cause scalding (second and third degree burns in which the skin blisters and swells). Skin does not return to normal but forms scar tissue on healing. Such burns may lead to a permanent disability.

Second and third-degree hot water burns can occur at the following rates temperatures:

110 degrees Fahrenheit	13 minutes
120 degrees Fahrenheit	10 minutes
127 degrees Fahrenheit	1 minute
130 degrees Fahrenheit	30 seconds
140 degrees Fahrenheit	6 seconds
158 degrees Fahrenheit	1 second

Recommendation

Adult Family Home operators must take the necessary steps to keep residents safe. Certifying agencies and operators must check the temperature of the hot water at the sinks, tubs, and showers used by residents. The temperature should be adjusted according to the

types of residents being served and the degree of independence they have in using sinks, showers, and tubs. To prevent scalding, it is recommended that a thermostatic mixing valve be installed on the cold and hot water lines that lead from the water heater to the fixtures. A thermostatic mixing valve tempers the water such that water temperature will not exceed the temperature at which the thermostat is set. The mixing valve will control the water temperature at sinks, tubs, and showers served by the water line

If thermostatic mixing valves are not installed, it is recommended that the water heater temperature be set only as high as necessary, so that during monitoring, a temperature between 110 and 120 degrees Fahrenheit may be reached at each faucet.

Questions concerning this memo should be directed to the attention of Patara Horn, at DHSOFCE@dhs.wisconsin.gov.

MEMO WEB SITE: http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/dsl_info/InfoMemos/InfomeIndex.htm