TITLE
SAFE BATHING TEMPERATURES AND FREQUENCY – HOTTEST FLOWING WATER FOR THERAPEUTIC TUBS

OBJECTIVES
• To identify consistent practices for health care providers related to measuring the hottest flowing water for all therapeutic tubs situated in a designated living option (DLO) setting, in order to ensure that water temperatures for all assisted bathing remain within a safe designated temperature range for patients.

APPLICABILITY
Compliance with this document is required by all Alberta Health Services employees, members of the medical and midwifery staffs, students, volunteers, and other persons acting on behalf of Alberta Health Services (including contracted service providers as necessary).

ELEMENTS
1. Equipment
   1.1 Thermometers used for measuring water temperatures shall be:
      a) approved for that purpose; and
      b) calibrated and maintained according to the manufacturer's instructions.
      c) Bath thermometer cards are not acceptable for this procedure.
2. Safety Precautions

2.1 For therapeutic tubs situated in a DLO setting, the temperature of the hottest water flowing into each tub must be measured prior to the first bath of the day and documented on the bath/shower water temperature log.

2.2 The hottest flowing water into a therapeutic tub shall not exceed 49 degrees Celsius.

3. Therapeutic Tubs – Daily Water Temperature Checks

3.1 Prior to the first bath of the day in the therapeutic tub, the health care provider shall:

a) turn on the water tap in the tub to hot only (two-handle faucet) or the hottest setting (single-handle faucet);

b) run the hot water at highest pressure until the hottest water temperature is achieved;

c) reduce the water flow to a steady stream (if applicable);

d) determine the temperature of the water:

(i) place the handheld thermometer into the water stream for at least 10 seconds without interference, remove the thermometer from the water stream and read the temperature (repeat this step if the therapeutic tub does not have an integrated tub thermometer); and

(ii) read the temperature from the integrated tub thermometer;

e) record the date, time, and hottest flowing water temperature from the handheld thermometer and/or the integrated tub thermometer on the bath/shower water temperature log for that tub.

3.2 If the hottest flowing water is greater than 49 degrees Celsius, the health care provider shall:

a) place an out-of-service sign on the tub over the faucet; and

b) notify the clinical leader.

3.3 Upon being informed of the hottest flowing water being greater than 49 degrees Celsius, the clinical leader shall:

a) ensure that all health care providers are notified; and

b) contact Maintenance to recalibrate the water temperature for the tub.
3.4 Once the issue has been resolved, the health care provider shall:
   a) confirm that the water temperature is within the acceptable range (no greater than 49 degrees Celsius) in accordance with the procedure outlined in Section 3.1 above;
   b) inform the clinical leader that the tub is now safe to use; and
   c) remove the out-of-service sign from the tub.

DEFINITIONS

Assisted bathing means, for the purposes of this document suite only, bathing where a patient is not able to bath or shower independently and/or needs assistance to get into or out of the tub or shower.

Clinical leader means the senior leader immediately available to provide immediate management of a clinical adverse event. This may be a charge nurse, on-duty supervisor, administrator on call, most responsible health practitioner, unit manager or other leader as appropriate.

Designated living option (DLO) means publicly funded residential accommodation that provides health and support services appropriate to meet the patient’s assessed unmet needs. The level of care is accessed through a standardized assessment and single point of entry process and consists of Designated Supportive Living Level 3 (DSL3), Designated Supportive Living Level 4 (DSL4) and Designated Supportive Living Level 4 Dementia (DSL4D) and Long-Term Care (LTC).

Health care provider means any person who provides goods or services to a patient, inclusive of health care professionals, staff, students, volunteers and other persons acting on behalf of or in conjunction with Alberta Health Services.

Integrated tub thermometer means, for the purposes of this document suite only, a device that controls or restricts the hot water for baths or showers. This may include, though is not limited to, mixing valves, scald free taps, and automatic shut-off systems.

Patient means all persons, inclusive of residents and clients, who receive or have requested health care or services from Alberta Health Services and its health care providers. Patient also means, where applicable:
   a) a co-decision-maker with the person; or
   b) an alternate decision-maker on behalf of the person.

Therapeutic tub means, for the purposes of this document suite only, a tub in which a patient is lifted into or it is fully accessible, often by a side door, which may or may not include a reservoir for water, jets, hydro massage or hydro sound. The patient is assisted to bathe in a therapeutic tub and the water temperature is regulated by the tub and/or the staff member. This is not a residential type tub. Examples include: Arjo, Century, Parker, Rhapsody, Freedom, Advantage, Serenity, Bellentra or Primo tub.
REFERENCES

- Alberta Health Services Governance Documents:
  - Reporting of Clinical Adverse Events, Close Calls, and Hazards Procedure (#PS-95-04)
  - Safe Bathing Temperatures and Frequency Procedure (#PS-47-01)
  - Safe Bathing Temperatures Policy (#PS-47)
- Alberta Health Services Forms:
  - Continuing Care Staff-Assisted Bath/Shower Safe Bathing Temperatures Competency Checklist (#08932)
  - Water Temperature Check Log (#08926)
- Alberta Health Services Resources:
  - Safe Bath Temperatures and Frequency Education
- Non-Alberta Health Services Documents:
  - Continuing Care Health Service Standards (Alberta Health)
  - Long-Term Care Accommodation Standards (Alberta Health)
  - Supportive Living Accommodation Standards (Alberta Health)

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