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

OBJECTIVES

• To identify consistent practices related to measuring the hottest flowing water for all therapeutic tubs situated in a Continuing Care Designated Living Option setting to ensure that water temperatures for all staff 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) within Continuing Care

ELEMENTS

1. Equipment

   1.1 Thermometers used for measuring water temperature shall be:

   a) approved for that purpose; and

   b) calibrated and maintained according to the manufacturer's instructions.

   1.2 Alberta Health Services (AHS) recommends use of the following thermometers for measuring the hottest flowing water:

   a) integrated tub thermometer; and
2. Safety Precautions

2.1 For therapeutic tubs situated in a Continuing Care Designated Living Option 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 staff member:

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

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

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

d) determines the temperature of the water:

   (i) places the hand-held thermometer into the water stream for at least 10 seconds without interference; removes the thermometer from the water stream and reads the temperature; and

   (ii) reads the temperature from the integrated tub thermometer.

e) records the date, time, and exact temperature from the hand-held thermometer and the integrated tub thermometer on the bath/shower log for that tub.

3.2 If the hottest flowing water is greater than 49 degrees Celsius:

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

b) the Site/Unit Manager, and all other staff working on that shift, shall be notified; and

c) maintenance staff shall be notified of the need to recalibrate the water temperature for that tub.

3.3 Once maintenance staff report that the issue has been resolved, staff shall:
PROCEDURE

SAFE BATHING TEMPERATURES AND FREQUENCY-HOTTEST FLOWING WATER FOR THERAPEUTIC TUBS

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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 2.1 above;

b) inform the Site/Unit Manager, and all other staff working on that shift, that the tub is now safe to use; and

c) remove the out-of-service sign from the tub.

DEFINITIONS

Bathing means, for the purposes of this document suite only, tub baths, showers, full body sponge baths or bed baths.

Continuing Care Designated Living Option (Designated Living Option) means, for the purposes of this document suite only, residential accommodation that provides publicly funded health and social 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 Levels 3, Designated Supportive Living Levels 4, Designated Supportive Living Levels 4 Dementia, and Facility Living/Long-Term Care spaces.

Exact temperature means the numerical temperature displayed on the integrated thermometer or handheld thermometer.

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

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

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:
  - Safe Bathing Temperatures and Frequency Policy (#PS-47)
  - Safe Bathing Temperatures and Frequency Procedure (#PS-47-01)
  - Reporting of Clinical Adverse Events, Close Calls, and Hazards Policy (#PS-11)

- 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)

VERSION HISTORY

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