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| Version: 4 FOI Status: Public | DSG Safety Guidance – Prevention of Burns due to Total Body Immersion in Hot Water or Contact with Hot Surfaces | Issued: July 2018 Review Due: July 2020 |
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**Departmental Safety Guidance –
Prevention of Burns and Scalds due to Total Body Immersion in Hot Water or
Contact with Hot Surfaces**

| Review/Issue Date | Any Significant Changes Required | By Whom |
|-------------------|---|----------------|
| July 1998 | | |
| April 2014 | | Trevor Thacker |
| January 2018 | | Trevor Thacker |
| July 2018 | Include the recording of bath temperature | Trevor Thacker |

Departmental Safety Guidance - Sign Off Sheet

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| Name of Establishment: | |
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I have read and understood the guidance set out in the Derbyshire County Council, Adult Care Departmental Safety Guidance – Prevention of Burns and Scalds due to Total Body Immersion in Hot Water or Contact with Hot Surfaces and I agree to adhere to this guidance.

| Name (please print) | Signature | Date |
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Advice to Managers – Prevention of Scalding Accidents

There have been some serious incidents and in some cases fatalities as a result of vulnerable people been fully immersed in hot water either baths or showers.

The maximum recommended temperature for hand wash basins, baths and showers is 43°C.

The risk is higher during bathing, particular if the person is confused, lacks skin sensitivity or has poor mobility.

Management Actions

- Carry out a bathing/showering assessment for each person using the facility.
- Produce a safe procedure for each person.
- Provide bath thermometers to enable the temperature of the water to be checked.
- Ensure all staff receive training/information on each person's assessment and the control measures that need to be followed.
- Regularly review the assessments and inform staff of any changes made, with records kept.
- Maintain and check any water temperature control devices as per the schedule.
- Information must be recorded on client's Personal Service Plan.

Assessment

An assessment must be made of the person's ability to bath unaided.

When carrying out the assessment consider the following:

- Is the person confused?
- Do they lack skin sensitivity? Some medications can reduce skin sensitivity or awareness.
- Do they lack mobility?
- Do they suffer from any condition which may affect their ability to bathe unaided e.g. Epilepsy?
- Do they suffer from any condition which may be exacerbated by extreme temperatures e.g. Raynaud's Disease, Diabetes etc.

Decide on the level of assistance or supervision needed to reduce the risk of each person.

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Practicable control measures which may help to reduce the risk

- Always check the water temperature using the thermometer before bathing commences. The water temperatures must be recorded on a sheet that is kept in the bathroom.
- In cases where the water temperature at source is above 43°C reduce the temperature of the water in the bath or shower to comfortable level for the person bathing. **THIS MUST BE BELOW 43°C**. Report the defect to Property Division for urgent action.
- Ensure that safe procedures have been formulated and documented and that all care staff are aware of them.
- Provide a sufficient number of trained staff to assist with/supervise the bathing activity following the requirements of the assessment.
- Where an assessment identifies that a person may be at risk of drowning or inadvertently flooding a room, plugs must be removed from the bathroom.

This list is not exhaustive

Monitor the success of these arrangements and revise has necessary.

Burns from Hot Surfaces

There have been a number of serious incidents caused by people falling against radiators and associated pipe work where other furniture or their health or condition prevents them moving away from the hot surface this has caused severe burns and in some cases has proved fatal.

In our establishments all radiators and exposed pipe work must have a surface temperature not exceeding 43°C.

This can be achieved by:

- By installing low surface temperature radiators.
- Covering radiators and pipes with radiator covers and boxing in the pipes.
- Installing thermostatic control valves on individual radiators set at 43°C or below.
- A combination of any of the above.
- **Establishments must ensure one or more of the above are in place.**

In home care, where there is potential for a client to come into contact with hot surfaces such as radiators and associated pipework at temperatures above 43°C, notify the client or their carer to that effect and advise on measures that can be taken to reduce the risks (see above).

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Risks of trips and falls must be considered around hot surfaces including fires and cookers.

For specific information regarding the reporting of incidents resulting in burns and scalds please refer to the [Accident and Assault Reporting and Investigation Guidance](#).

Hot Water Bottles, Microwaveable Wheat Bags

The use of hot water bottles, wheat bags, electrical heating devices etc. have been known to cause severe burns or health issues due to the difficulty of regulating the temperature of the device.

The risks are:

- The heat from these items, when applied to the skin can cause the body to divert blood away from vital organs to cool the affected area, causing failure of those organs.
- The bottle or bag may split causing scalds or burns.
- Prolonged contact with the item, particularly for people with peripheral neuropathy, diabetes or those taking certain medication etc. can again cause scalds or burns.
- It is difficult for carers to judge whether the devices are at the correct temperature for the needs of the person.

Adult Care staff should not be asked to heat and/or apply this type of equipment

THESE ITEMS MUST NOT BE USED UNLESS THE GP HAS BEEN CONSULTED AND HAS AGREED TO THIS COURSE OF ACTION. IT MUST BE INCLUDED IN THE RISK ASSESSMENT AND PERSONAL SERVICE PLAN AND SUBJECT TO REGULAR REVIEW.