

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

744 P Street, Sacramento, CA 95814



SEP 11 2006

CCL INFORMATION RELEASE NO. 2006-04**REASON FOR THIS TRANSMITTAL**

- State Law Change
- Federal Law or Regulation Change
- Court Order
- Initiated by CCL

TO: ALL COMMUNITY CARE LICENSING DIVISION STAFF**SUBJECT: DISTRIBUTION OF TIPS FOR LICENSEES TO PREVENT
HEAT-RELATED ILLNESSES**

The heat wave much of California experienced during July 2006 brought home the importance of being prepared for extremely hot weather. Many of the populations in our facilities are vulnerable during a heat wave, particularly very young children and the elderly. In response to the July 2006 heat wave, we sent a mass mailing to all licensees of the attached handout, Tips for Licensees to Prevent Heat-Related Illnesses (also available on our web site at www.cclid.ca.gov).

Site visits. To build on this initial effort, please do the following during site visits in heat-prone areas (particularly during a heat alert):

- Provide the licensee or designee with a copy of the attached handout, Tips for Licensees to Prevent Heat-Related Illnesses.
- Discuss the attached handout with the licensee or designee to ensure that the facility is prepared to care for clients/residents during a heat wave. The handout emphasizes the importance of having an up-to-date emergency disaster plan.
- Encourage the licensee or designee to post the attached handout in a prominent place in the facility during the summer months, next to the facility's emergency disaster plan and local emergency telephone numbers.

Orientations. Similarly, during orientations, please distribute copies of the attached handout to applicants and discuss how important it is for licensed facilities to be prepared for heat waves.

Thank you for your assistance. We plan to develop a self-assessment guide for licensees to assist them in preparing for heat-related emergencies, which should be helpful as well. If you have any questions, please contact Barbara Rooney at (916) 653-3702.

Sincerely,



J. O. FREDERICK, Deputy Director
Community Care Licensing Division

Attachment

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

744 P Street, Sacramento, California 95814

**COMMUNITY CARE LICENSING DIVISION:
TIPS FOR LICENSEES TO PREVENT HEAT-RELATED ILLNESSES**

- Make sure that the **temperature** in your facility is safe and comfortable.
- Review your facility's **emergency disaster plan**. It should include:
 - Up-to-date emergency telephone numbers.
 - Contingency plans in case the facility's air-conditioning system goes out.
 - An evacuation plan in case residents/clients need to be moved to a motel or other "cooling center." (Call 1-800-952-5210 for a local cooling center.)
- Monitor the **television** or **radio** for important local heat-related announcements.
- Report any heat-related illnesses/deaths to the local licensing office immediately. The elderly, the very young and those with chronic illnesses are at greatest risk.
- Be alert for any changes in clients/residents—physical, mental or emotional—that may indicate a heat-related illness.
- Consider establishing a **hydration station** in the facility, where water and other fluids are always available to clients/residents and staff.
- Contact your **local licensing office** for help with evacuations or other assistance.

General Tips:

- Never leave infants, children or the frail elderly unattended in a parked car.
- Drink plenty of fluids. Don't wait until you're thirsty.
- Dress in lightweight, loose-fitting clothing. Use a hat and sunscreen as needed.
- Drink fruit juice or a sports beverage to replace salts and minerals lost during heavy sweating. (If a client/resident is on a low-sodium diet, check with his/her physician first.)
- During the hottest parts of the day, keep physical activities to a minimum and stay indoors in air-conditioning and out of the sun.
- Use fans as needed.
- Open windows to allow fresh air to circulate when appropriate.
- Use cool compresses, misting, showers and baths.
- Avoid hot foods and heavy meals—they add heat to the body.
- Eat frozen treats, such as popsicles, between meals.

Heat Stroke and Heat Exhaustion: **Heat stroke**—which occurs when the body can't control its temperature—may result in disability or death if emergency treatment is not given. **Heat exhaustion** occurs when the body loses a large amount of water and salt contained in sweat.

Warning signs of heat stroke vary, but may include:

- An extremely high body temperature (above 103 degrees Fahrenheit, orally)
- Unconsciousness
- Dizziness, nausea and confusion
- Red, hot and dry skin (no sweating)
- Rapid, strong pulse
- Throbbing headache

Warning signs of heat exhaustion vary, but may include:

- Heavy sweating
- Muscle cramps
- Weakness
- Headache
- Nausea or vomiting
- Paleness, tiredness, dizziness

What to Do: If you see any of these signs for heat stroke or heat exhaustion, you may be dealing with a life-threatening emergency and should do the following:

- Have someone call 911 while you begin cooling the victim.
- Get the victim to a shady area.
- Cool the victim rapidly with a cool bath or shower, or by sponging with cool water, until body temperature drops to 101-102 degrees Fahrenheit, orally.
- If emergency medical personnel are delayed, call the hospital emergency room for further instructions.
- Do not give the victim alcohol to drink.
- Again, get medical assistance as soon as possible.

If a victim's muscles twitch uncontrollably as a result of heat stroke, keep the victim from injuring him/herself, but do not place any object in the mouth and do not give fluids. If there is vomiting, make sure the airway remains open by turning the victim on his/her side.

* * * * *

Information for this handout was provided by documents prepared by the California Department of Health Services (CDHS). For additional information, including access to information in other languages, please see the CDHS web site at www.dhs.ca.gov. The CCLD web site can be accessed at www.cclid.ca.gov, and the State Office of Emergency Services web site can be accessed at www.oes.ca.gov.