



A not for profit company

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Effective Date:	January 1, 2016	Replaces:	January 15, 2015

SECTION:	CLIENT SERVICES
TOPIC:	SAFE BATHING AND SHOWERING

**Intent:** To maximize safe practices for individuals in service.

Individuals who are independent in bathing/showering (do not need any assistance with water temperature regulation, cleaning themselves, etc.) will have this clearly identified in their profile.

Written physician and guardian approval **MUST** be given for any exceptions to these temperature guidelines and must be documented in the client’s profile and bathing procedure.

Individuals who require any support whatsoever with their bathing and showering routine include (but are not limited to):

- Individuals with physical or mobility challenges who need assistance getting in and out of the tub
- Dependent individuals who need assistance in bathing
- Individuals with medical conditions which put them at risk for not feeling temperature quickly or who have high pain thresholds (e.g. diabetes)
- Individuals with seizure disorders.

Gloves will **NOT** be worn when bathing or showering as it impedes the ability to sense the temperature of the water. Gloves will only be worn in rare circumstances which will be outlined in each individual’s bathing procedure or applicable treatment plan.

For any individual in service who requires assistance with their showering or bathing routine the following must be tended to:

1. To Prevent Scalding from Faucet Hot Water:

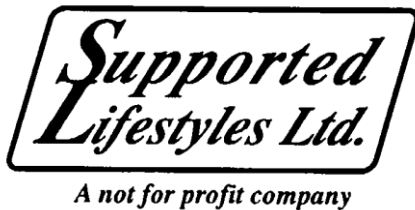
Staff assisting a client with their bath or shower will carefully test the water temperature with their lower arm (inner wrist) and then take the water temperature with an agency issued probe thermometer *before the client enters the bath or shower*. Staff will follow the agency’s Safety Measures for Hot Water Bathing and Showering Procedures located in the Health & Safety Binder. **This needs to occur each time there is a bath or shower.**

The water temperature for a bath or shower must be between 36° and 40°C.

**DO NOT PROCEED WITH A BATH OR SHOWER IF THE TEMPERATURE IS NOT BETWEEN 36° and 40°C.**

**TEMPERATURES EXCEEDING 40°C INCREASE THE RISK OF SCALDS.**

**\*\*If the employee believes that the water temperature feels hotter than the required temperature and believes there is a risk of scalding, the employee will not proceed. The Service Area On-Call Procedures will be followed. On-Call will test and compare the water temperature with the On-Call kit thermometer.**



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If the client indicates (verbally or non-verbally) that the temperature of the water is too hot:

- The client shall be immediately removed from the bath or shower.
- The client shall be assessed for any skin redness (use the agency Scald/Burn Poster as a reference guide). If signs of scalding are present, support staff will call 911 immediately and follow the Service Area On-Call Procedures.
- If skin redness is noted call Health Link (as outlined in the poster) and follow their directions. An appropriate Supervisor (Office Level) must be notified immediately and directions/instructions will be provided regarding how to proceed in the caring for the client.
- If the skin shows no signs of redness the tub/water temperature shall be re-adjusted for the client's comfort following the above mentioned procedure.

Should the client identify that the temperature of the water is too cold:

- The client shall be immediately removed from the tub/shower.
- Steps shall be taken to provide for the client's immediate comfort and safety e.g., wrap in a towel or bathrobe.
- The tub/water temperature shall be re-adjusted for the client's comfort following the Safe Bathing/Showering Procedure.

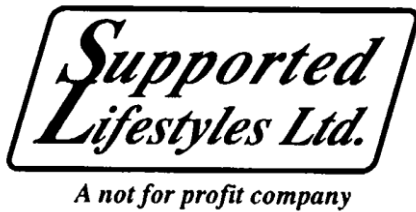
It is important to remember clients must be removed from either the tub or shower BEFORE any adjustment of water temperature can be done.

The water temperature must be recorded on the *Hot Water Tracking for Baths & Showers* (located in the bathroom) prior to having the client enter the bath or shower.

**NOTE:** Water temperature must also be tested and documented when giving sponge baths or hand/foot soaks, as outlined above and written into the individual's treatment plan and/or bathing profile.

Any client who needs any type of assistance in the bathtub or shower, or needs assistance preparing a safe temperature for their bath or shower, will have procedures written in their Profile.

1. Any Individual who requires assistance in the bathtub or shower can never be left alone (**not even for a second**) once they enter the bathroom for the safe bathing and showering routine, as they could drown or be injured. To ensure the safety of these individuals, staff will follow the Bathing Procedures outlined in each Individual's Profile. All necessary items (including a protective pillow or blanket) will be gathered and put into the washroom before commencing a bath or shower.



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2. Individuals who require assistance in the bathtub or shower in a home where there is more than one client in the home, must have a minimum of two staff on shift and present in the home when bathing or showering occurs (as clients cannot be left alone during these routines) or the bath/shower CANNOT be completed. If there is a need for an immediate cleanup and only one staff is available, a sponge bath on a blanket on the floor or their bed may be an alternate way of cleaning a client’s body. Staff will follow the Safety Measures for Hot Water Bathing and Showering when preparing the water for a sponge bath.
3. Clients who like to play with water and turn on taps: Consider having child proof protectors on the taps, or a faucet pressure valve that regulates the temperature to a maximum of 40°C.
4. Individuals at risk of injury to themselves (banging or rocking) can be protected by having a soft cover on the faucet.
5. Preventing slips & falls: Each home will have non-slip mats in the tub or shower, and non-slip mats outside the tub or shower to catch drips.
6. Handrails on bathtub walls will be installed for any client with stability issues to help them maintain their balance entering and leaving the bathtub/shower areas. Staff will assist individuals to use these rails. Many individuals use a chair in the shower. Required equipment to support individuals in bathrooms will be ordered by supervisors from the client’s home health care supplier.
7. Needs for changes to the bathing procedure will be considered on an ongoing basis, and minimally reaffirmed annually. Required changes will be submitted to the Client Safety Coordinator for review. The Client Safety Coordinator will ensure all necessary changes to bathing/showering routines are updated as required.
8. During orientation, all staff must successfully complete a bathing practicum and orientation prior to bathing/showering a client. This orientation and practicum is also reviewed annually.
9. Office Supervisors will observe and document staff practice in following the bathing procedures. Documentation will be completed on the document titled “SAFE BATHING AND SHOWERING TESTING PROCEDURE”. Completed tests will be submitted to the Service Area Director.



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10. If an individual has a history of seizure activity but is capable of completing a bathing/showering procedure independently, staff must remain in the immediate area (as defined in the profile) of the washroom to ensure the safety of the client throughout the bathing/showering routine. Guardian and physician approval must be obtained and renewed annually to permit the individual to bathe independently.
11. If an individual has a history of seizure activity (within the past 2 years), there must be a minimum of two (2) staff in the home to complete a bathing/showering routine.
12. Bathing and showering procedures must be followed 100% of the time. Any staff choosing not to follow the safety measures identified above, or as outlined in a client profile, will receive disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

**References:**

Safe Bathing/Showering Procedure  
Accreditation Standards  
Individual Bathing Procedures