



Nevada Department of
Health and Human Services
DIVISION OF PUBLIC AND
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

TECHNICAL BULLETIN

Topic: Heat Advisory

From: Bureau of Health Care Quality and Compliance

Date: June 21, 2017

To: Health Care Providers and the Public

The purpose of this technical bulletin is to help providers and the public understand the dangers of excessive heat, symptoms of heat-related illness and preventive measures.

Heat Advisory Reminder

Excessive heat has hit both Northern and Southern Nevada in the past week and is a potential condition anytime throughout the summer months. It is imperative to ensure everyone's safety when out in the heat and when transporting people in vehicles. It is especially important for providers to understand the dangers of excessive heat, symptoms of heat-related illness and measures to prevent such illness or symptoms.

Providers should take extra precautions and train staff to be aware of the signs of heat illness and to take precautions to protect residents/patients/clients from heat exhaustion and heat stroke. The elderly and people with chronic disease are most at risk. Most deaths caused by heat stroke occur in people age 50 years and older. They are most likely to have a medical condition or be taking medication that can interfere with the body's response to heat.

The best defense against heat-related illness is prevention. Other precautions:

- Drink plenty of water. Drink liquids 30 minutes before going outside and continue even if you don't feel thirsty. Avoid alcohol, caffeine and sugary drinks.
- Take action at the first sign of heat illness. Symptoms of heat illness include heavy sweating, muscle cramps, weakness, dizziness, nausea, weak and rapid pulse and headaches. People with these symptoms should find shade, drink water slowly and make sure there is good ventilation. If symptoms do not improve, seek medical attention.
- When transporting residents/patients/clients: Never leave anyone in a parked vehicle — even for a short period of time. Vehicles can heat up to deadly temperatures in minutes. Cracking the windows does little to keep temperatures down. Elderly and disabled people are particularly vulnerable to the heat. Ensure that all individuals safely exit the vehicle when reaching its destination. Staff should be trained and reminded of the following:



- Have a list of all individuals who are being transported and verify at drop-off locations that everyone has exited the vehicle.
- If possible, conduct a secondary check of the vehicle every time it is parked to assure that no one remains inside.
- Make sure that the seat belt and seat surface are not too hot before helping individuals with buckling up.
- Frequently check residents/patients/clients. Watch for signs of heat illness. Assist residents/patients/clients with transportation to places with air conditioning and make sure they know what to do if they experience heat illness. This would include frequent checks of residents/patients/clients who like to go outside. Ensure staff/caregivers are aware of those who are going outside and have a plan in place to frequently check on them.
- Stay in an air-conditioned area. It is the best way to combat heat. If air conditioning is not available, open windows, pull down shades to keep out direct sunlight and use fans to cool rooms until air conditioning is restored. Monitor residents/patients/clients and relocate them immediately at the first sign of heat illness.

Health facilities should notify the Bureau of Health Care Quality and Compliance if their air conditioning fails or the facility is experiencing severe heat-related issues.

Signed:

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