

# The Safety Net

A Quality Assurance Bulletin

## ISSUE IV MARCH 2008

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### Equal Opportunity Employer/Program

Under Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, the Department prohibits discrimination in admissions, programs, services, activities, or employment based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, and disability.

The Department must make a reasonable accommodation to allow a person with a disability to take part in a program service or activity. For example, this means if necessary, the Department must provide sign language interpreters for people who are deaf, a wheelchair accessible location, or enlarged print materials. It also means that the Department will take any other reasonable action that allows you to take part in and understand a program or activity, including making reasonable changes to an activity. If you believe that you will not be able to understand or take part in a program of activity because of your disability, please let us know of your disability needs in advance if at all possible.

To request this document in alternative format or for further information about this policy, contact the Division of Developmental Disabilities ADA Coordinator at (602) 542-6825; TTY/TTD Services: 7-1-1.

## HOW HOT IS HOT ENOUGH?

—Sandra J. Verheidje  
DDD QUALITY ASSURANCE ADMINISTRATOR

Each year, thousands of adults and children are burned by tap water that is too hot. According to an article by the University of Missouri, Columbia Extension, Hot Water Burns:

- Nearly two (2) million people are treated for burns each in the United States.
- About one hundred thousand (100,000) will be hospitalized, and nearly twelve thousand (12,000) will die.
- About one hundred twelve thousand (112,000) of these burns are scald burns.

### These burns can be prevented!

The major cause of scalds in homes is a water heater set too high:

- 150° F water scalds in just one-half (½) second!
- 140° F water scalds in just one (1) second!



Water heaters leave the factory set at 140-150 degrees Fahrenheit.

Prevention:

- Turn down the water heater to 120 degrees.
- Test the bath water before putting anyone into the water.
- Investigate products designed to maintain water temperatures at preset temperatures.

In addition to preventing accidents, this decrease in temperature will conserve energy and save money.

*Hot Water burns  
can be prevented!*

### Arizona Administrative Code R9-33-203. Safe and Functioning Systems

A. A licensee shall ensure that:

4. Hot water temperatures in the facility are maintained between 95° F and 120° F.

TITLE 6. ECONOMIC SECURITY, CHAPTER 18.  
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY, LICENSING,  
CERTIFICATION, AND REGULATION

R6-18-707 Plumbing Requirements

- D. The hot water temperature in areas for bathing does not exceed 120° F.

## ASPIRATION and ASPHYXIATION

**Aspiration and Asphyxiation are two very important words for everyone to know.**

ASPIRATION is the blockage of an individual's airway. Suffocation, the fatal effect of ASPHYXIATION, is prevented if the object is removed from the air passage. Aspiration is when anything other than air goes into the airway and lungs, causing pneumonia. Since aspiration and asphyxiation are critical to people's safety, paying attention to several associated risk factors can help.

Some risk assessment factors are constipation, lack of gag reflex, gum disease, increased frequency of seizures, and the presence of skin breakdown in the past six (6) months. In addition, documented aspiration or pneumonia during the last twelve (12) months, a history of bowel obstruction of fecal impaction are important indications that the individual needs special attention.

Other observable signs and symptoms involve actions and behaviors that heighten the individual's risk of asphyxiation and aspiration, such as the individual's refusal to let others touch their mouth, eating a meal in less than five (5) minutes, wheezing, pooling of food in the mouth, throwing head back to swallow, gagging, persistent drooling, pain/heartburn at the tip of the breastbone,



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# SECONDS COUNT TO SAVE A LIFE!

—Sandra J. Verheijde  
DDD QUALITY ASSURANCE ADMINISTRATOR

Urgency and time are the most important elements to consider in some medical conditions when a change in condition becomes evident. Every second can make the difference in saving a life during a medical emergency. If you are not sure if the situation at hand is a medical emergency, it is best to err on the side of caution. You should *never* call a supervisor to discuss a medical emergency prior to rendering first aid or calling 911.



Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) is an emergency procedure involving chest compressions and artificial respiration. When the heart stops beating regularly and can no longer pump blood through the body, every minute that passes without help reduces a person's chance of surviving by about 10 percent. The best chance a person has to survive is for you to recognize what is happening and react quickly by starting CPR and calling 911.

Choking can cause a complete or partial blockage of the airway. Choking can be identified by:

- ✦ The inability to talk
- ✦ Difficulty or noisy breathing
- ✦ The inability to cough forcefully
- ✦ Skin, lips and nails turning blue
- ✦ Loss of consciousness

In addition to knowing how to perform the Heimlich maneuver, it is essential that you call 911. Even if you are able to dislodge the foreign body before the arrival of 911 personnel, you lose precious life saving seconds if you wait to call.

According to the Epilepsy Foundation, call 911 for seizures if:

- ✦ The seizure happened in water
- ✦ The victim is pregnant
- ✦ The victim has diabetes
- ✦ The victim is injured
- ✦ The seizure lasts more than five (5) minutes
- ✦ The seizures are repeating before the victim regains consciousness

The Division trends all incident reports and has noted a number of incidents where the employee first called their supervisor prior to calling 911. Along with this reminder, the monitoring unit will be placing a focus during their review on the policy that is in place regarding calling 911 during any emergency situation.

Thank you for your attention and if you need assistance, please call Sandra Verheijde, Quality Management Administrator @ 602-542-6962.

This newsletter is presented by Central Office Quality Assurance Unit of the Division of Developmental Disabilities. Articles are researched and compiled by Quality Assurance staff. Any questions or feedback, please contact Steve Stencil at 602-817-6700.

## ASPIRATION and ASPHYXIATION

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swallowing large mouthfuls rapidly, loss of food or fluid from the mouth, and coughing and/or choking.

For individuals at risk for aspiration and/or asphyxiation, it should be noted on the person's Risk Assessment with precautions that should be taken to prevent an occurrence.

### Avoiding Choking Aspiration and Asphyxiation

- Know if the person has past issues with choking and pneumonia.
- Pay attention to problematic habits, such as eating food quickly, and swallowing large portions.
- Make note of the person's digestive and breathing problems.
- Learn about the person's medications and if they can lead to problems eating food.

## Key Facts & Concerns with the FLU!



—Vicki Kronabetter  
AREA PROGRAM MANAGER  
STATE OPERATED SERVICES

Type A influenza (flu) has hit Arizona! This flu is rapid onset with an incubation period of three (3) days.

The infectious period is from one (1) day before the symptoms develop to five (5) days after becoming sick. Symptoms of the flu include: fever (usually high), headache, extreme tiredness, dry cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle aches, and stomach problems like nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea can also occur.

If employees show these symptoms, consider sending them home. If consumers show these symptoms, please isolate them as much as possible from other individuals and notify their Primary Care Provider (PCP). Make sure to use precautions to prevent the spread of the flu by using mask, gowns, and gloves. Hand-washing and air born precautions are critical to the prevention of spreading this disease.

If the flu has spread to your home, all visitors to the home should be restricted in order to decrease the spread of the illness. During flu season, please encourage staff and individuals to wear masks if going to doctor appointments, urgent care, emergency room, or any other medical appointments. These precautions will help decrease the risk of contracting the flu.



### UPCOMING ARTICLES:

**Best Practice Regarding Handling  
and Safeguarding of Consumer  
Funds**

**Head Injuries:**

**How to Prevent, Detect and Treat**

**Components of a Good Corrective Action Plan**