



POLICY: Resident Choice and Safety During Baths or Alternative Bathing Techniques

Program Area: Personal Care Home

Section: General

Reference Number: CLI.6410.PL.027

Approved by: Regional Lead – Community & Continuing Care

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Revised yyyy/mmm/dd

Residents, Families and staff were engaged in the development of this policy.

POLICY SUBJECT:

Resident choice and safety during baths or alternative bathing techniques

PURPOSE:

This document outlines expectations related to meeting Manitoba Health Personal Care Home Standards and Southern Health-Santé Sud Organizational Core Values (Integrity, Excellence, Respect, Compassion and Innovation).

BOARD POLICY REFERENCE:

Executive Limitation 1 (EL-1) Global Executive Restraint & Risk Management
Executive Limitation 2 (EL-2) Treatment of Clients
Executive Limitation 7 (EL-7) Corporate Risk

POLICY:

Manitoba Health Personal Care Home Standard (*Safety & Security, Standard 19*) outline that operators of personal care homes (PCH) are to provide residents with a safe, secure and comfortable environment consistent with their care needs.

These standards include meeting the following:

- maintaining temperatures in residential areas, including bathing areas, at a minimum of 22°C. Some residents may also elect to have the room warmer depending on the resident's preference.
- maintaining domestic hot water, at water sources that are accessible to residents not less than 43°C or more than 48°C, excluding temperatures for resident bathing.
- PCH Standards indicates Residents bath water are to be between 38°C - 43°C. Temperatures can be adjusted lower based on resident choice, but should not be lower than 37°C which is body temperature. These situations are to be documented on the Regional Bathing Log Form (CLI.6410.PL.027.FORM.01 or CLI.6410.PL.027.FORM.02), in column RPT, stating the reason for the lower temperature (e.g. resident choice).
- Two options of the Regional Bathing Log Form are provided – sites can choose which form would suit their needs best.

Residents are to be *offered* a weekly bath, at minimum, in each personal care home. If a resident chooses to have a bath on a different day than is scheduled, then the resident choice is to be upheld. Similarly, residents, whether deemed competent or incompetent, will not be given care, including baths/showers, against their own free will. Various techniques are to be implemented to adapt care to the resident's needs as outlined in the Bathing Flowsheet for Residents in Personal Care Homes (CLI.6410.PL.027. SD.01).

DEFINITIONS:

Alternative Bathing Techniques: non-traditional approaches to bathing residents in a manner that is alignment with their care. Refer to Alternative Bathing Technique Poster (CLI.6410.PL.027.SD.02).

Examples are noted below:

- Towel bath: bathing a resident using a large, warm moist towel containing a no-rinse soap solution with washing and massaging through the towel.
- Recliner bath: bathing a resident in a recliner chair using a basin of water or a no-rinse soap and padding each body part washed with a towel.
- Seven-Day Bath: washing the resident by dividing the body into seven parts and washing one each day. Allows for short episodes and is not as overwhelming for some residents.
- Shared Shower: a resident and partner shower together while assuring privacy and a comfortable environment for a couple. Some family members elect to have a shower with their loved one as it is easier to bath the resident when it is done together. This may also help a couple continue this part of their relationship.
- Shower: showering a resident while using an appropriate chair which can be padded with washcloths to make the seat more comfortable. Footstools may also be beneficial to allow residents to rest their feet instead of them hanging and consideration can be given to using a bath blanket so the resident can remain covered. A care provider's hand can also be used to adjust the flow of the water through the shower nozzle over the resident.
- Sponge bath: washing the resident in-room with a water and basin or no-rinse soap. The resident is kept covered with a bath blanket exposing on the area that is being washed for a brief period of time.
- Singing Bath: bathing the resident in-room while singing to the resident. Resident's upper body is washed and then while the resident is getting out of bed the lower half of the resident is washed. Hair is washed on another day and could be done with a basin while the resident is lying in bed.
- Toilet or Commode Bath: following a resident using the toilet or commode, wash and dress the resident's upper torso then wash the legs, peri area/bottom. Wash the resident's hair in the bathroom sink using washcloths to wet/rinse hair; this approach is usually best for thin hair.
- Under the Clothes Bath: washing a resident with a no-rinse soap under the clothes in short episodes, particularly in focused areas (e.g. under arms, breasts, genital areas).

IMPORTANT POINTS TO CONSIDER:

In accordance with Southern Health-Santé Sud's core values and the Resident Bill of Rights, no resident, whether deemed competent or incompetent, are to receive care against their will.

PROCEDURE:

1. Prior to placing a resident in a bath tub/shower, the staff member or family member, if having a shared shower, are to check the temperature in the room and take the water temperature using a facility-approved external thermometer (note: some thermometer gauges that are built into the tub have been found to vary). Room temperatures are to be at minimum 22°C. Keep in mind some residents may want to have the room warmer and so the room temperature may need to be adjusted. Water temperatures are to be not less than 43°C or more than 48°C in resident accessible areas, excluding bathing water.
2. Bathing water temperatures are to be not less than 38°C or more than 43°C in resident accessible areas. If a resident requests that the water temperature be lower than 38°C, then an accommodation will be made providing there are no safety concerns.
3. Staff members who are assisting or bathing the resident are to document the water temperature on the Regional Bathing Log Form, *prior to* bathing the resident. Should a family member be having a shared shower the water temperature will be taken and reported to a staff member who will document this on the facility approved form, indicating that the family member reported the water temperature. Staff are to provide education to the family on how to take the water temperature, the water temperature thresholds, and how to operate the shower.
4. Should a family member wish to bath the resident on their own in a bath or shower, the family member will take the temperature and report it to a staff member who will document this on the facility approved form, indicating that the family reported the water temperature. Staff are to provide education to the family on how to take the water temperature, water temperature thresholds, and how to operate the tub/shower.
5. Should a resident request to have a bath/shower on an alternative/preferred day other than his/her scheduled bath day, the resident's request will be honoured. Consideration will be given to bathing another resident instead and adjustments made to the bath schedule for that week. Staff are to communicate with each other regarding the schedule change for the week to ensure that the resident is offered a bath on an alternative and agreed upon day.
6. Should a resident decline/become upset/agitated when a bath is being attempted then the bath will be stopped, an alternative bathing technique will be discussed with the nurse, health care team and designated family as to another approach. Prior to determining an alternative approach, the health care team will assess and document the resident's reason for refusing the bath, if the resident is able to communicate his/her thoughts. Refer to the Resident Bathing Flowsheet as to next steps.
Alternative approaches to be explored include a towel bath, recliner bath, seven-day bath, shared shower bath, singing bath, toilet/commode bath and under-the clothes bath.

EQUIPMENT/SUPPLIES:

The following supplies are to be used when bathing the resident or using alternative bathing techniques:

- External thermometer: using a thermometer that is separate from a tub/shower.
- Hygiene products (e.g. shampoo/conditioner, body soap, no-rinse soap, as deemed appropriate).
- Linen (e.g. towels, wash clothes).
- Music, as deemed appropriate.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

CLI.6410.PL.027.FORM.01	Regional Bathing Log Form (Option 1)
CLI.6410.PL.027.FORM.02	Regional Bathing Log Form (Option 2)
CLI.6410.PL.027. SD.01	Bathing Flowsheet for Residents in Personal Care Homes
CLI.6410.PL.027. SD.02	Alternative Bathing Technique Poster

REFERENCES:

MyHealth.Alberta.ca. *Staying at Home: Tips for Your Bathroom (2019)*. Cited September 8, 2023 from: [Bathroom Safety for Older Adults \(alberta.ca\)](#)

The Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Research. *Bathing Without a Battle*. Cited May 30, 2023 from: [Bathing Techniques - Bathing without a Battle \(unc.edu\)](#)

Manitoba Health Personal Care Home Standard - *Safety & Security, Standard 19*