

Division of Public and Behavioral Health Technical Bulletin



Topic: Heat Advisory

Section/Program/Contact: Bureau of Health Care Quality and Compliance/Health Facilities/Julie Bell

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TO: HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS AND THE PUBLIC

This technical bulletin is being provided to assist providers and the public in understanding dangers of excessive heat, symptoms of heat related illness, and preventive measures.

Heat Advisory Reminder


Excessive heat is forecast for the upcoming weeks across the state of Nevada. 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 preventive measures.

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 from heat exhaustion and heat stroke. The elderly and people with chronic diseases are most at risk. Most deaths caused by heat stroke occur in people over 50 years old. They are more 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 but 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.** Never leave anyone in a parked vehicle – even for a short time. Vehicles can heat up to deadly temperatures in minutes. Cracking the windows does little to keep temperatures down. Elderly and disable 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 that 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 the vehicle is parked to assure that no one remains in the vehicle

- Make sure that the seat belt and seat surface are not too hot before assisting individuals with buckling up.
- **Frequently check residents/patients.** Watch for signs of heat illness. Assist residents/patients 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 resident/patients who like to go outside. Ensure staff/caregivers are aware of residents/patients who are going outside and have a plan in place to frequently check on these residents/patients
- **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 and relocate them immediately at the first sign of heat illness. Notify the Bureau of Health Care Quality and Compliance.

Signed: 
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Date: 7/2/2014

Signed: 
Richard Whitley, MS, Administrator
Nevada State Health Division

Date: 7/2/2014