

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

744 P Street, Sacramento, CA 95814

**COMMUNITY CARE LICENSING DIVISION:  
TIPS FOR LICENSEES TO PREVENT HEAT-RELATED ILLNESSES**

- Make sure that the **temperature** in your facility is safe and comfortable.
- Review your facility's **emergency disaster plan**. It should include:
  - Up-to-date emergency telephone numbers.
  - Contingency plans in case the facility's air-conditioning system goes out.
  - An evacuation plan in case residents/clients need to be moved to a motel or other "cooling center."
- Monitor the **television** or **radio** for important local heat-related announcements, and check the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) web site at [www.oes.ca.gov](http://www.oes.ca.gov) for heat-related tips and information on cooling centers statewide.
- Report any heat-related illnesses/deaths to the local licensing office immediately. The elderly, the very young and those with chronic illnesses are at greatest risk.
- Be alert for any changes in clients/residents—physical, mental or emotional—that may indicate a heat-related illness.
- Consider establishing a **hydration station** in the facility, where water and other fluids are always available to clients/residents and staff.
- Contact your **local licensing office** for help with evacuations or other assistance.

**General Tips:**

- Never leave infants, children or the frail elderly unattended in a parked car.
- Drink plenty of fluids. Don't wait until you're thirsty.
- Dress in lightweight, loose-fitting clothing. Use a hat and sunscreen as needed.
- Drink fruit juice or a sports beverage to replace salts and minerals lost during heavy sweating. (If a client/resident is on a low-sodium diet, check with his/her physician first.)
- During the hottest parts of the day, keep physical activities to a minimum and stay indoors in air-conditioning and out of the sun.
- Use fans as needed.
- Open windows to allow fresh air to circulate when appropriate.
- Use cool compresses, misting, showers and baths.
- Avoid hot foods and heavy meals—they add heat to the body. Eat frozen treats.

**Heat Stroke and Heat Exhaustion:** **Heat stroke**—which occurs when the body can't control its temperature—may result in disability or death if emergency treatment is not given. **Heat exhaustion** occurs when the body loses a large amount of water and salt contained in sweat.

**Warning signs of *heat stroke*** vary, but may include:

- An extremely high body temperature (above 103 degrees Fahrenheit, orally)
- Unconsciousness
- Dizziness, nausea and confusion
- Red, hot and dry skin (no sweating)
- Rapid, strong pulse
- Throbbing headache

**Warning signs of *heat exhaustion*** vary, but may include:

- Heavy sweating
- Muscle cramps
- Weakness
- Headache
- Nausea or vomiting
- Paleness, tiredness, dizziness

**What to Do:** If you see any of these signs for heat stroke or heat exhaustion, you may be dealing with a life-threatening emergency and should do the following:

- Have someone call 911 while you begin cooling the victim.
- Get the victim to a shady area.
- Cool the victim rapidly with a cool bath or shower, or by sponging with cool water, until body temperature drops to 101-102 degrees Fahrenheit, orally.
- If emergency medical personnel are delayed, call the hospital emergency room for further instructions.
- Do not give the victim alcohol to drink.
- Again, get medical assistance as soon as possible.

If a victim's muscles twitch uncontrollably as a result of heat stroke, keep the victim from injuring him/herself, but do not place any object in the mouth and do not give fluids. If there is vomiting, make sure the airway remains open by turning the victim on his/her side.

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This handout is on the CCLD web site at [www.cclid.ca.gov](http://www.cclid.ca.gov). It incorporates information provided by documents prepared by the California Department of Health Services (CDHS). In addition to the OES web site at [www.oes.ca.gov](http://www.oes.ca.gov), please see the CDHS web site at [www.dhs.ca.gov](http://www.dhs.ca.gov) for more information.