



**DELAWARE HEALTH
AND SOCIAL SERVICES**

DIVISION OF
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES SERVICES

SERVICE INTEGRITY & ENHANCEMENT

TO: DDDS Home and Community Based Service Providers

FROM: Laurie Smith, Service Integrity Program Administrator *LMS*

DATE: October 15, 2020

SUBJECT: Guidance RE: "hot water temperature" in DDDS Standards

As a result of questions from providers, DDDS is issuing guidance on the following sections of its provider standards regarding the requirement that **hot water temperature may not exceed 115° F**.

- 1.15.12.2 Neighborhood Home (NH)
- 2.15.12.2 Community Living Arrangement (CLA)
- 5.11.4.1 Day Habilitation
- 6.11.4.1 Prevocational

NH, CLA, Day Habilitation and Prevocational sites must maintain a water temperature of **115° F** or below.

During a new site, annual or random environmental inspection, any water temperature greater than **115° F** will be noncompliant with the standard. New sites with water temperatures exceeding **115° F** will not be approved to open until the water temperature demonstrates compliance with the standard or DDDS approved an exception for the site.

During Service Integrity reviews the Program Evaluators will look for the following information to gauge compliance if the water temperature exceeds **115° F**.

- (1) Waiver from DHCQ if this home is licensed as a Neighborhood Home
- (2) Documentation in each resident's person-centered plan justifying exception
- (3) Documentation in each resident's person-centered plan identifying supports needed to ensure their health, safety and well-being.

Please Note:

- Water temperatures must register at or below **115° F** for compliance.
- Digital Thermometers usually provide the most accurate reading.
- Providers are responsible for ensuring the health, safety and well-being of all service recipients in their care.
- Children and elderly are subject to burn at lower temperatures.



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- Water temperatures may fluctuate when other appliances are running concurrently.
 - Example: when a toilet flushes, it pulls cold water to fill up the tank. This often causes a shower to become suddenly hot.
- A boiler or hot water heater can be set at a higher temperature if hot water regulations are set properly on the output devices.
- Health Care Quality (HCQ) Regulation 5.5.4 states “Hot water at shower, bathing and hand washing facilities shall not exceed 115° F (46° C)”.

Water Temperature Safety Guide

Water Temperature °F	Time for 1st Degree Burn	Time for Permanent Burns 2nd & 3rd Degree
110	Normal Shower Temp	-
116	35 Minutes	45 Minutes
122	1 Minute	5 Minutes
131	5 Seconds	25 Seconds
140	2 Seconds	5 Seconds
149	1 Second	2 Seconds
154	Instantaneous	1 Seconds

Source: United States Consumer Product Safety Commission

Possible Solutions to Correct Excessive Water Temperatures:

- Install water mixing valves that regulate the hot water to cold water ratio in your faucet.
- Turn down the temperature on the hot water heater
- Install regulators, anti-scald device or adjust anti-scald ring
- Replace faulty valve, temperature regulator or thermostat
- Consult a professional

If you have any questions, please contact Laurie Smith at Laurie.Smith@delaware.gov

Thank you