STATE OF CALIFORNIA—HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

CDSS

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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." For information on local **cooling centers** click on: Summer Heat Resources

- Monitor the **television** or **radio** for important local heat-related announcements.

- 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. A list of licensing offices is at: http://www.ccld.ca.gov/contact.htm

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.

- 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, such as popsicles, between meals.

Heat Stroke and Heat Exhaustion

Heat stroke - 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.

This information was provided by documents prepared by:

- California Department of Public Health (CDPH)
  http://www.cdph.ca.gov/Pages/DEFAULT.aspx,

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
  http://www.cdc.gov/extremeheat/

- State Office of Emergency Services
  www.oes.ca.gov

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