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## 1. INTRODUCTION

NHS Borders places great importance on safety and seeks to protect vulnerable patients from the risk of being scalded and or burnt from hot water.

Therefore all patient use hot water taps in NHS units have been fitted with thermostatic mixing valves, which minimise the risk of scalding. However these devices can fail, therefore the temperature of the water should always be checked before a patient is exposed to it.

There is a particular risk when bathing vulnerable patients, including:

- children
- older people
- people with reduced- mental capacity, mobility or temperature sensitivity
- people who cannot react appropriately, or quickly enough, to prevent injury, these patients will not be able to alert the nurse to the problem before considerable harm has occurred

## 2. SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- all employees bathing patients
- healthcare partners using NHS Borders premises to bathe patients/clients

## 3. AIMS

The policy aims to ensure:

- Patients are never exposed to water temperatures that could result in scalding/burning.
- Staff are aware of the water temperature checks that must be undertaken prior to a patient being bathed.
- Patients requiring assistance with bathing are never left unattended while bathing

## 4. DEFINITIONS

### **Bath Water Temperature Log Sheets**

- Records the water temperature prior to bathing a patient.

### **Thermostatic Mixing Valves**

- Thermostatic mixing valves blend hot water with cold water to enable constant, safe shower and bath outlet temperatures, preventing scalding

## 5. LEGISLATION

Several pieces of legislation are relevant to the bathing policy-

- Health and Safety at Work, etc Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 as amended
- Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992
- The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998

## 6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

**Chief Executive** shall:

- Have overall responsibility for the implementation of the bathing temperature policy.
- Will ensure appropriate resources are available to manage the risks from hot water.

**Director of Nursing and Midwifery shall:**

- Have delegated responsibility for implementation of the bathing temperature policy.
- Ensure safe practices in respect of patients requiring assistance with bathing are developed and implemented.

**General Manager/Associate Directors of Nursing and Midwifery shall:**

- Oversee implementation of the policy thus ensuring bath water temperature will be checked prior to bathing commencing.
- Monitor compliance with the policy.

**Head of Estates shall:-**

- Ensure Thermostatic Mixing Valves are installed on all patient baths and showers.
- Ensure the ongoing maintenance of the engineering controls installed for the purposes of controlling water temperatures
- Ensure all staff maintaining such controls are competent to do so.

**Clinical Audit Support Team shall:**

- Provide support to the audit process to monitor compliance.

**Ward/Departmental Managers shall:**

- Ensure all staff are aware of the bathing policy and suitably trained to assist patients with bathing.
- Ensure that implementation of the policy is part of the performance appraisal and personal development plan of all individual staff.
- Ensure that risk assessments have been undertaken for bathing patients.
- Ensure all healthcare partners using the bathing facilities within the ward have been given training and instructions on the bathing equipment including hoists, the bathing policy and will monitor compliance.
- Monitor compliance with the policy.

**Individual Clinicians shall:**

- Only check bathing water with the calibrated temperature probes as identified by this policy.
- Only bathe patients once the water temperature has been checked and found to be in compliance with this policy.
- Complete the bathing temperature logs.
- Will immediately take out of use any bath where the temperature is found to be above 44°C an “**equipment out of use sign**” must be placed on the bath. The Senior Charge Nurse and Estates must be informed of all such failures.
- Notify Estates/Senior Nurse of any temperature probes that are not working.
- Report any adverse events or near misses in accordance with NHS Borders Adverse Event Policy.

## **Healthcare Partners** (e.g. Scottish Borders Council) shall:

- Not bathe any clients/patients until they have been given training and instructions on the use of NHS Borders bathing facilities, equipment and bathing policy.
- Only bathe clients in accordance with the procedures outlined within this policy.
- Only bathe clients once the water temperature has been checked with a calibrated probe and found it to be in compliance with this policy.
- Complete the bathing temperature logs.
- Will immediately take out of use any bath where the temperature is found to be above 44°C an “**equipment out of use sign**” must be placed on the bath. The Senior Charge Nurse must be informed of all such failures.
- Notify the Senior Charge Nurse of any temperature probes that are not working.
- Report any adverse events or near misses to the Senior Charge Nurse.

## **7. MONITORING**

**Monitoring** – line managers shall undertake inspections at regular intervals, to monitor:

- That staff are correctly implementation of the bathing temperature policy within the ward/department
- That bathing temperature log sheets are being completed

## **8. REFERENCE**

1. Health and Safety Executive, Information Sheet. Managing the risks from hot water and surfaces in health and social care <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/hsis6.pdf>

## **9. STANDARDS**

### **1. NHS Borders Employees**

All NHS Borders employees assisting patients with bathing on NHS Borders premises must adhere to this policy and have received appropriate training in the use of all equipment used in the bathing process.

**The bath water for all patients requiring assistance with bathing must not exceed 44° centigrade.** <sup>1</sup>

### **Process**

- All baths will be maintained to ensure the correct operation of the thermostatic mixing valve and the delivery of water at a temperature no greater than **44°** centigrade
- All patients will be assessed on admission, and throughout their care episode, regarding the level of assistance they require with bathing
- Their care needs will be recorded in their care plan with the review date clearly stated
- The bath temperature will be checked on every occasion where nurses are assisting patients
- A laminated copy of each of the bathing protocols will be displayed in every bathroom – see appendices 1, 2 & 3
- Each NHS Borders bath will have an associated thermometer kept in the same room
- An approved thermometer will be issued on request by the Estates Department
- A bathing log sheet will be kept in each bathroom – see appendix 4
- Details of each bath must be recorded on the log sheet:

- Date
- Patient CHI/CRN
- Temperature of the bath water prior to immersion of the patient
- Staff signature and designation
- Any new member of staff must be trained in the protocol before bathing a patient
- Each thermometer must be maintained by the Estates Department – see appendix 5
- If staff have any concerns about the accuracy of a thermometer in their ward/unit, it should be removed from use and sent for urgent assessment to the Estates Department tel: **01896 826363**

**Bathing should not take place until the water temperature has been measured and found to meet the required level. This can be done by using an alternative thermometer from a nearby bathroom, taking particular care with cleaning. There are also spare thermometers available from the Estates Department.**

2. Bath water temperature log sheets will be retained on site for a period of 3 months.

## **2. Health Care Partners (including Scottish Borders Council Employees)**

NHS Borders premises may be used by Health Care Partners employees with service users to address personal care needs. Any healthcare partners employees bathing a client on NHS Borders premises must receive training prior to using the bathing facilities. Training will include:

- Use of bathing hoists and adjustable height baths
- Use of temperature probe
- Emergency procedures
- Bathing policy

Training will be provided either by NHS Borders or SBC staff with an appropriate level of prior training from NHS Borders. Records must be retained of persons trained and training provided.

### **NHS Borders will ensure:**

- All baths are maintained quarterly to ensure the correct operation of the thermostatic mixing valve and the delivery of water at a temperature no greater than **44°** centigrade
- All bath hoists and adjustable height baths are maintained and subject to LOLER test as required.
- An approved thermometer is available
- All facilities and equipment are regularly cleaned
- A laminated copy of each of the bathing protocols is displayed in every bathroom – see appendices 1, 2 & 3

**The bath water for all clients requiring assistance with bathing must not exceed 44° centigrade.**

### **PROCESS**

- All clients will be assessed regarding the level of assistance they require with bathing
- Their care needs will be recorded in their care plan with the review date clearly stated
- The bath temperature will be checked on every occasion using an NHS Borders supplied thermometer/integrated digital thermometer
- Bathing must not proceed if any of the following issues are encountered-
  - The water temperature is above **44°** centigrade
  - The water temperature is too cold
  - The hoist or adjustable height bath is not working or is out with its LOLER test

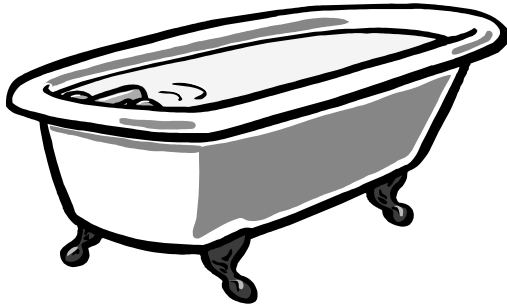
- If staff have any concerns about the accuracy of a thermometer, it should be removed from use and sent for urgent assessment to NHS Borders Estates. **Bathing should not take place until the water temperature has been measured and found to meet the required level. This can be done by using an alternative thermometer from a nearby bathroom, taking particular care with cleaning.**

In all circumstances faults must be reported to NHS Borders Estates on **01896 826363**

- A bathing log sheet will be kept in each bathroom – see appendix 4
  - Details of each bath must be recorded on the log sheet:
    - Date
    - Client details
    - Temperature of the bath water prior to immersion of the client
    - Staff signature and designation
  - Completed monthly bath water temperature log sheets will be retained by the NHS ward for 3 months. The log sheets may be subject to periodic audit by NHS Borders to ensure the thermostatic mixing valves are working appropriately.
  - Each thermometer must be maintained by the Estates Department – see appendix 5
2. After use all bathing areas must be left in clean and tidy and ready for use by the next person. Cleaning materials are available from NHS Borders.

## Appendix 1

### Bathing Temperature Protocol



1. Fill the bath with water
2. Check the temperature reading does not exceed 44° centigrade

***If water temperature exceeds 44° centigrade, the thermostatic valve is faulty and is unsafe for bathing. The bath must be put out of use immediately with an “out of order” notice placed on the bath and the Estates Department informed***

3. If the temperature reading is below 44° centigrade, the patient can be immersed in the bath
4. Record the bath temperature and the patient’s CHI/CRN on the log sheet

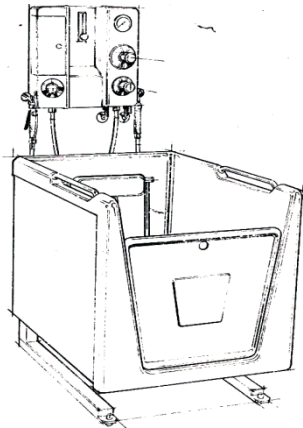
**Never!!**

**Leave any patient requiring assistance alone in the bathroom**



## Appendix 2

### Bathing Temperature Protocol - Medi-Baths



1. Run the water into the bath for a minute holding the thermometer under the tap continuously
2. Check the temperature reading does not exceed 44° centigrade

***If water temperature exceeds 44° centigrade, the thermostatic valve is faulty and it is unsafe for bathing. The bath should be put out of use immediately with an “out of order” notice placed on the bath and the Estates Department informed***

3. If the temperature reading is below 44° centigrade, seat the patient in the bath
4. Commence adding more water to the bath, checking the water temperature continuously as before

***Again, if the temperature exceeds 44° stop adding water and remove the user immediately. The bath should be put out of use immediately and the Estates Department informed***

5. Record the bath temperature and patient's CHI/CRN on the log sheet

**Never!!**

**Leave any patient requiring assistance alone in the bathroom**

## Appendix 3

### Bathing Temperature Protocol – Height Adjustable Baths



1. Fill the bath footwell with water
2. Check the temperature reading does not exceed 44° centigrade

***If water temperature exceeds 44° centigrade, the thermostatic valve is faulty and it is unsafe for bathing. The bath should be put out of use immediately with an “out of order” notice placed on the bath, and the Estates Department informed***

3. If the temperature reading is below 44° centigrade the patient can then be seated in the bath and the bath reclined to fully immerse the patient
4. Record the bath temperature and patient’s CHI/CRN on the log sheet

**Never!!**

**Leave any patient requiring assistance alone in the bathroom**

## Bathing Temperature Log Sheet

Ward/Unit\_\_\_\_\_

Bath Location\_\_\_\_\_

Date	Patient reference number	Water temperature	Signature and designation

The temperature of the bath water should be **no more than 44°** centigrade, before putting the patient in the bath

If you have any reason to think that the water from the hot tap is excessively hot (more than 44°C) **do not use** the bath, place an “out of order” notice, contact the Estates Department immediately and inform the ward/unit charge nurse.

Estates Department helpline: **01896 826363 or email Estates Help Desk**

**Form to be given to the ward/unit charge nurse when full.**

## Appendix 5

### Bathing Thermometer Maintenance and Calibration

1. Suitable thermometers have been supplied and installed in each bathroom
2. Each Estates Department plumber has been supplied with a thermometer which can be calibrated against a known reference source
3. During each scheduled test of the bath thermostatic mixing valve the accuracy of the Ward/Department thermometer will be checked using the plumbers' thermometers as a reference
4. On an annual basis the reference source and plumbers thermometers will be sent for calibration to UKAD (NAMAS) standard
5. For any other faults contact the Estates Department helpline: **01896 826363** or **email Estates Help Desk**