



South Carolina Long Term Care Emergency Preparedness e-Newsletter:

Winter 2023

Welcome, we're glad you're here.

Another perk of attending a South Carolina Long Term Care Emergency Preparedness - Basic/Advanced Course is gaining access to this bi-annual newsletter curated for nursing home staff members like you.

Be sure to check out our webpage for other helpful resources.

[SC LTCEP Webpage](#)

Focus Area: Heat Emergencies

We know, we know. This is the winter newsletter, right?

It may feel a little early, but the time to prepare for heat emergencies is before the weather starts warming up.

Heat is the number one weather-related cause of death in the United States and should be taken seriously. As humans age, our bodies become less effective at managing body temperature. Increased age combined with chronic medical conditions and medications, means older adults are much more likely to experience heat-related illnesses than younger adults.

On warm days, pay close attention to not only the temperature but also the heat index. The heat index is how hot it feels, measuring temperature and humidity. The more humid it is, the longer it takes for sweat to evaporate and cool down the body.

$$\text{heat index} = \text{temperature} + \text{humidity}$$

Heat-Related Illnesses



There are multiple types of heat-related illnesses which range from sunburn to heat stroke. Each illness has different symptoms and requires different levels of medical care. See the following flyer for a list of symptoms and responses. Download the flyer [here](#), print it, and post it at your nurses' station for a summertime reminder to look out for the signs of heat-related illnesses.

HEAT-RELATED ILLNESSES	
WHAT TO LOOK FOR	WHAT TO DO
HEAT STROKE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> High body temperature (103°F or higher) Hot, red, dry, or damp skin Fast, strong pulse Headache Dizziness Nausea Confusion Losing consciousness (passing out) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Call 911 right away-heat stroke is a medical emergency Move the person to a cooler place Help lower the person's temperature with cool cloths or a cool bath Do not give the person anything to drink
HEAT EXHAUSTION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heavy sweating Cold, pale, and clammy skin Fast, weak pulse Nausea or vomiting Muscle cramps Tiredness or weakness Dizziness Headache Fainting (passing out) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move to a cool place Loosen your clothes Put cool, wet cloths on your body or take a cool bath Sip water <p>Get medical help right away if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You are throwing up Your symptoms get worse Your symptoms last longer than 1 hour
HEAT CRAMPS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heavy sweating during intense exercise Muscle pain or spasms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stop physical activity and move to a cool place Drink water or a sports drink Wait for cramps to go away before you do any more physical activity <p>Get medical help right away if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cramps last longer than 1 hour You're on a low-sodium diet You have heart problems
SUNBURN <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Painful, red, and warm skin Blisters on the skin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay out of the sun until your sunburn heals Put cool cloths on sunburned areas or take a cool bath Put moisturizing lotion on sunburned areas Do not break blisters
HEAT RASH <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Red clusters of small blisters that look like pimples on the skin (usually on the neck, chest, groin, or in elbow creases) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay in a cool, dry place Keep the rash dry Use powder (like baby powder) to soothe the rash



Resident Safety Tips

Read below for safety tips for residents in warmer weather:

- Review resident medications and identify those which may cause residents to be more susceptible to heat and sunlight.
- Discourage strenuous physical activity as appropriate, especially outdoor activities.
- Remind residents to dress in light, loose clothing. Overdressing can increase the risk of a heat related illness.
- Encourage residents to stay out of direct sunlight, both indoors and outdoors.
- Do not rely on residents to tell you they are overheated! Often, the increase in body temperature is so gradual it can't be recognized by the individual.
- Set up hydration stations throughout the facility
- Stock up on fluids and cold snacks, such as popsicles
- Ask dietary staff to incorporate cold plate options like salads

Staff Safety Tips



Read below for safety tips for staff members in warmer weather:

- Discourage strenuous physical activity as appropriate, especially outdoor activities.
- Encourage staff to complete outdoor maintenance activities early in the morning to avoid higher temperatures later in the day.
- Remind staff to drink more water than usual and don't wait until they are thirsty to drink.
- Increase the frequency of clinical assessments for residents, particularly body temperature.
- Checking skin temperature by touch can be a quick, helpful way to assess a resident.
- For more safety tips on working outdoors, view this flyer [here](#).

Facility Safety Tips



Read below for safety tips for your facility in warmer weather:

- Regular maintenance checks and servicing of your facility's HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) systems should be performed by qualified individuals and documented.
- Know what to do if your facility's air conditioning stops working for any reason and make sure your staff knows also!
- Keep the account numbers and emergency phone numbers of your facility's utilities providers and HVAC service providers on hand in the facility for immediate use during an outage.
- Do you know who can order an evacuation of your facility due to a total loss of air conditioning?
 - If that person was not at work that day, do they have a backup person who could order an evacuation? If so, who is it?

Upcoming Courses:

Year Two features four basic and four (new!) advanced courses offered across the state. Click [here](#) to download a full schedule with links to register.

Like our Facebook page to stay up to date on course offerings as they are scheduled.

[Facebook Page](#)

Resources

- [South Carolina Emergency Management Division Website](#)
- [South Carolina Healthcare Coalition Webpage](#)
- [South Carolina Healthcare Coalition Map List Flyer](#)
- [South Carolina Healthcare Coalition Map](#)
- [South Carolina Public Health Region Map](#)
- [South Carolina Health Care Association Website](#)
- Hot Weather Safety - National Institute on Aging:**
 - <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/hot-weather-safety-older-adults>
- Preparing for Extreme Heat:**
 - <https://www.ready.gov/heat>
- National Weather Service/Grb Safety:**
 - <https://www.weather.gov/grb/heat>
- CDC Information on Extreme Heat:**
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/toolkits/extremeheat/default.html>
- OSHA Worker Safety - Heat:**
 - <https://www.osha.gov/heat>



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