

Ministry of Long-Term Care

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June 22, 2020

MEMORANDUM TO: Long-Term Care Home Licensees
Long-Term Care Home Administrators
Long-Term Care Home Directors of Nursing and Personal Care

FROM: Stacey Colameco
Director, Long-Term Care Inspections Branch

RE: **Preparing For Hot Weather During The Covid-19 Pandemic**

The hot weather season has arrived and with many LTCHs focused on controlling the spread of COVID-19, having the time to manage residents and any heat-related symptoms during the summer will be challenging. This memo, while not intended to be a comprehensive guide, aims to help LTCHs understand the **requirements and expectations** when preparing for, monitoring, and preventing hot weather-related illness in residents during this Pandemic.

When does hot weather become a risk to residents?

When heat and humidity are combined, it is known as the **humidex** which is displayed as a number on a chart. For at risk groups such as LTCH residents, the acceptable upper temperature limit is 26°C and a humidity level of approximately 50% for comfort. When these numbers are plotted on the [humidex chart](#), the value is 30. Therefore, LTCHs must monitor conditions inside and outside of the home to know when to initiate actions and control measures to manage possible heat-related illness. To help prepare for extreme heat events, consult Environment and Climate Change Canada's (ECCC) [weather website](#) regularly or your local weather station.

What are my top 10 priorities if I don't have central air-conditioning?

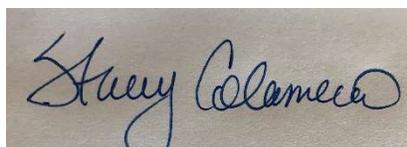
1. I have dedicated common areas that can be cooled in all home areas or on each floor and there are enough of these areas to accommodate all residents in the building, considering physical distancing as required.
2. I have assigned someone to monitor the indoor air temperature and humidity levels in these dedicated cooling areas three times per day (when outdoor conditions exceed a humidex of 30) so that cooling areas remain below a humidex of 30.
3. I have a back up supply of portable air conditioners in the building in case any of the others fail or if any are needed in high risk resident rooms (if electrical capacity is available).
4. In case of a power outage, my generator will power the air conditioning equipment in the designated cooling areas. If I don't have a generator, I can call a company to deliver one if necessary and it is capable of being hooked-up on the same day.

5. I have an evacuation or relocation plan for residents if I can't keep my building cool enough during extreme heat episodes to manage resident heat-related symptoms.
6. Any fans that are in the building, are kept clean and used in accordance with Public Health Ontario guidelines. (See "COVID-19: Fans and Air Conditioning Units")
7. Any air-conditioning systems have been inspected, cleaned and are working and portable air conditioners have been cleaned and disinfected before use.
8. I have enough staff to assess each resident for heat risk, to monitor them for symptoms of dehydration and other heat-related symptoms, to offer them adequate fluids and to know when to report concerns to an RN.
9. The menu plan includes foods that can be eaten cold and have a high-water content.
10. Care staff are familiar with resident cooling strategies, location of cooling equipment and supplies, how to forward heat complaints and report malfunctioning equipment to maintenance staff.

During extreme weather alerts, the ministry monitors incoming temperature complaints and critical incidents. These are prioritized and triaged with urgency.

The Guidelines for the Prevention and Management of Hot Weather-Related Illness in Long-Term Care Homes are being updated and will be posted soon.

Thanks for your attention into these matters.

A photograph of a handwritten signature in blue ink on a light-colored piece of paper. The signature reads "Stacey Colameco" in a cursive script.

Stacey Colameco

cc: AdvantAge Ontario
Ontario Long-Term Association