

**Ministry of Children,
Community and Social Services**
Service Delivery and
Supports Branch

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**Ministère des Services à
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MEMORANDUM TO: [Transfer Payment Recipient]
[Executive Director/Director]
Agency / [insert region]

FROM: **Diane Wise**
Director of Service Delivery and Supports Branch

RE: **Supervision of individuals during bathing/showering**

The developmental services sector has suggested that being informed of serious incidents when they occur in the province may act as a good reminder for every one of why adhering to health and safety requirements is critical. The purpose of this communication is to highlight one of these important issues:

In the recent past, there have been a couple very serious occurrences involving individuals bathing in a tub unsupervised, when the individual support plan, clearly stated that these individuals should never have been left alone while bathing.

The most commonly cited non-compliance during service agency inspections in 2017/18 related to the absence of written precautions on supervision to ensure the person's safety during bathing and showering. The requirement states:

“each service agency shall have policies and procedures on supervision during bathing and showering to ensure the safety of the person, as appropriate to the needs of the person with a developmental disability”, (O.Reg.299/10,25(5)).

This requirement is intended to mitigate the potential risk of injury and to ensure the safety of individuals during bathing and showering. Policies and protocols must **clearly** identify the level of supervision that may be required for **each** individual, regardless of the level of support, and provide clear direction to staff.

Remember:

A person can drown:

- In small amounts of water
- When other people are around
- Quietly, without splashing or yelling
- Quickly, within seconds

Action:

To prevent future tragedies, the ministry strongly encourages all service agencies to:

- Review (and update, if necessary) their bathing protocols, policies and procedures with staff.
- Raise awareness of the importance of following an individual's bathing protocols and the severe consequences that may occur when one doesn't.
- Ensure that supervision is appropriate to the needs of each individual is provided.

Please contact DSCCompliance@ontario.ca if you have any questions or www.gamtraining.net for additional compliance supports.

It is incumbent upon all of us to ensure that every precaution is taken to prevent serious injury or death. Your attention to this matter and the diligence and commitment of your staff to ensure the safety of all residents is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Diane Wise

- c. Community Program Managers, Developmental Services
Program Supervisors, Developmental Services, MCCSS
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