

Hot Water Temperatures in Nursing Facilities

DES MOINES, IOWA (September 19, 2013) – The Department recently received questions about hot water temperatures in nursing facilities. Previously, Iowa Administrative Code 481—chapter 61 generally required hot water temperatures of between 110 (resident areas) and 120 (dietary). However, on July 3, 2013, a new chapter 61 became effective, which incorporates by reference the Facility Guidelines Institute’s (FGI) Guidelines for Design and Construction of Health Care Facilities, 2010 edition. [rule 61.2(3)]. The FGI Guidelines require temperatures of 95 to 110 degrees Fahrenheit (35-43 degrees Centigrade) in resident care areas and a minimum of 140 degrees Fahrenheit (60 degrees Centigrade) in dietary and laundry. (See Table 4.1-2)

Table 4.1-2
Hot Water Use—Nursing Facilities

	Resident care areas	Dietary	Laundry
Liters per hour per bed ¹	11.9	7.2	7.6
Gallons per hour per bed ¹	3	2	2
Temperature (°Centigrade)	35-43 ²	60 ³	60 ⁴
Temperature (°Fahrenheit)	95-110 ²	140 (min.) ³	140 (min.) ⁴

¹ Quantities indicated for design demand of hot water are for general reference minimums and shall not substitute for accepted engineering design procedures using actual number and types of fixtures to be installed. Design will also be affected by temperatures of cold water used for mixing, length of run and insulation relative to heat loss, etc. As an example, total quantity of hot water needed will be less when temperature available at the outlet is very nearly that of the source tank and the cold water used for tempering is relatively warm.

² The range represents the maximum and minimum allowable temperatures.

³ Provisions shall be made to provide 180°F (82°C) rinse water at warewasher (may be by separate booster) unless a chemical rinse is provided.

⁴ Provisions shall be made to provide 160°F (71°C) hot water at the laundry equipment when needed. (This may be by steam jet or separate booster heater.) However, it is emphasized that this does not imply that all water used would be at this temperature. Water temperatures required for acceptable laundry results will vary according to type of cycle, time of operation, and formula of soap and bleach as well as type and degree of soil. Lower temperatures may be adequate for most procedures in many facilities but higher temperatures should be available when needed for special conditions. Minimum laundry temperatures are for central laundries only.

While the Department strongly encourages all facilities to comply with the FGI Guidelines, it recognizes the provision in rule 61.2(6) that generally deems existing facilities in compliance with the current chapter, in the absence of renovations, additions, etc. Surveyors will continue to test water temperatures during annual surveys, but facilities that fall under rule 61.2(6) will not be cited for failure to comply with the FGI Guidelines.

NOTE: Federally-certified facilities may also want to refer to the State Operations Manual, tag F323 protocols related to water temperatures, available at http://cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Guidance/Manuals/downloads/som107ap_pp_guidelines_ltcf.pdf