

Supported Residential Services (SRS) Newsletter

November 2010, Edition 7

Welcome to this edition of SRS News

In this edition

- new stand-alone SRS Legislation
- heatwave resources
- emergency management plans
- welcome to Allan Russell
- importance of suitable staff
- reminders
 1. hot water systems
 2. communication systems
 3. restraint
- hot summer day tips

Stand-alone SRS legislation

In August 2010, the *Supported Residential Services (Private Proprietors) Act 2010* was passed by Parliament. This is the first time that SRS will have stand-alone legislation.

The main reforms in the Act include:

- new occupancy rights for residents
- new financial protections for residents when entering a SRS
- new requirements for all new staff to have police checks, and for day to day managers to be assessed
- additional enforcement mechanisms
- strengthened reporting requirements for serious incidents
- a shift to outcome-based standards and
- streamlined administrative processes.

What this means for you

Now we are working on the SRS regulations to support the new Act. You will have the opportunity to comment on the draft regulations.

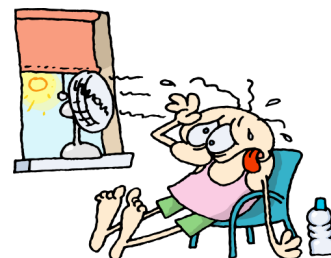
2012 is when it all happens

Next year the department will assist proprietors and staff to become familiar with the new Act and regulations. Until that time, the *Health Services Act 1988* and the *Health Services (Supported Residential Services) Regulations 2001* will remain in force.

Heatwave resources

Summer is on its way. That means warm sunny days and BBQs. It also means possible periods of extreme heat. Extreme heat is dangerous to everyone, especially people living in communal residential services such as Supported Residential Services. As hot days can occur early in summer, and the effects of such heat can be rapid, the department recommends that you undertake preparations before the hot weather arrives.

In order to assist proprietors, the department will be sending out some useful resources that you can use before and during a heatwave and will help make things better for residents, staff, and visitors of your SRS during hot days. Keep a look out in your letterboxes for these resources in the near future and consider displaying the poster and brochures in communal areas.



Emergency management plans

The approaching summers also means that it is time to renew your emergency management plans for the summer. This includes having up to date

plans for bushfires, heat waves and electricity outages.

For further assistance and information, proprietors should be talking to local council emergency management staff.

Welcome to Allan Russell

The Aged Care Residential Services Unit welcomes Allan Russell as the new Team Leader in the SRS and Accommodation Support Unit. He has joined the department from the community sector and has a background and interest in mental health issues.

Allan will have responsibility for Accommodation Support which includes the Supporting Accommodation for Vulnerable Victorians Initiative (SAVVI), the Low Cost Accommodation Programs and the Oral Health Initiative.

Allan has already met some staff at SRS and will continue visits over the coming months.

Allan's contact details are:

Allan.Russell@health.vic.gov.au

The importance of suitable staff in SRS

Proprietors are required to ensure employees engaged in the personal support of residents are suitable for the roles in which they are employed.

As many of you will be aware, Authorised Officers recently conducted audits that focused on how proprietors assess the suitability of current and future employees. A copy of the department's staffing guidelines can be downloaded from the website:

http://www.health.vic.gov.au/srs/downloads/personal_care_staff.pdf

When the new SRS legislation comes in, the guidelines will be updated and information and training will be provided to proprietors.

Reminder 1: Hot water systems in SRS



Hot water scalding is a real risk, particularly where residents are frail, confused or have impaired

mobility. Scalding can cause major injury or even death. This is highlighted in a recent event where an SRS had the hot water system reignited by a plumber after heavy rains in September.

After an inspection, it appears that the hot water system was set at a temperature higher than would be expected for an SRS causing a significant burn to a resident's forearm and other superficial burns.

This situation highlights the importance of all SRS proprietors needing to be aware of the requirements relating to hot water under the *Health Services Act, 2001*.

These are that the proprietor must provide a system that controls the outlet temperature of hot water at every bath and shower used by residents.

The recommended hot water temperature range is 40.50C to 43.50C.

The system must contain a fail-safe shut-off of hot water should it exceed the upper temperature.

The system should be maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

A useful resource

The *Residential Aged Care Coronial Communiqué* highlights selected cases that have been reported to the State Coroner's Office and are of interest to the Aged Care and SRS sectors.

Topics have covered medication management, care planning, balancing resident's right to take risks (such as cigarette smoking) and how associated risks may be reduced.

The aims of the Communiqué are:

- to improve the awareness of workers, carers and those in positions of governance about adverse events resulting from systems failures. Lessons from past cases can then be applied to their own organisations.
- to improve workers' understanding of the coronial system.

The Communiqué is produced quarterly and distributed electronically to subscribers.

Subscription is free. To be added to the distribution list, email - <mailto:racc@vifm.org>

Reminder 2: Communication systems or call bells in SRS



A highly reliable electronic communications system is essential in a facility that accommodates people who are frail or physically impaired. In an emergency, or whenever assistance is required, residents, staff or visitors must be able to summon staff quickly and be assured that their call will be answered. Residents should also feel free to use the system whenever necessary (not only in emergencies). They should not be discouraged from using the communications system.

Under the *Health Services Act 1988* the proprietor of an SRS must ensure that an electronic communications system to enable residents and staff to summon assistance is provided in the service in accordance with the regulations. Health Services (Supported Residential Services) Regulations 2001.

Regulation 31. Communications systems in supported residential services.

- (1) For the purposes of section 108J of the Act, the electronic communications system must –
 - (a) enable calls to be made from each bedroom, toilet, shower room and bathroom of the service; and
 - (b) be operational at all times.
- (2) If the electronic communications system referred to in sub-regulation (1) is shut down for servicing or fails to operate, the proprietor of a supported residential service must ensure that a back-up communications system commences operation immediately the electronic communications system is shut down or fails to operate.

The electronic communication system must be operational at all times or have an effective backup system. It is recommended that it:

- is easy to use
- is not easily tampered with
- includes an indicator at the point of call to show the system is operational
- includes a mechanism that will unambiguously indicate the location of a call

- enables calls to be cancelled manually only at the point of call
- has an audible tone that can be heard in all corridors, service areas and staff areas, and signals continuously until it is deactivated at the point of call
- enables the sound to be deactivated in the main body of the building at night yet remain audible in staff and service areas
- incorporates a device that will register the sounding of the front door bell.

Call points must be located to ensure easy access for all residents. This should include:

- at each bedside and within reach of a resident while in bed
- in all showers, toilets and bathrooms. These call points should be waterproof, fixed at hip height and be within the reach of a resident should they fall to the floor.

It is also recommended that call points be located in the common rooms.

The system should be capable of easy expansion if the need arises.

Additionally, an amendment to the Australian Building Code, 2005 applies to SRS and this states the following:

The communication system must -

- (a) contain a back-up power supply; and
- (b) have a control that enables the call to be cancelled manually at the point of origin only, and
- (c) incorporate a device at the point of origin that indicates the system has operated. and
- (d) incorporate an indication panel in the manager's office or staff area that clearly identifies the point of origin of a call; and
- (e) have an audible tone that has a continuous signal until deactivated at the point of origin, and
- (f) be operational at all times, and
- (g) have two call points in each en-suite or combined shower/ water closet with one call point located in the shower recess and the other on the wall beside the closest pan ahead of the bowl rim, and
- (h) have call points (other than those mentioned in (g) which are located –
 - i. within the reach of the resident while in bed; and
 - ii. in all common *habitable* rooms; and
 - iii. in all bathrooms, *sanitary compartments* and shower rooms where the call point must be of waterproof construction and within reach of any fallen resident.

Reminder 3: Restraint in SRS

The Community Visitors Annual Report 2009-10 raised concerns about the use of restraints for residents who may have issues with accidental falls and other problems. A range of literature and departmental work in relation to residential aged care has illustrated that alternatives to restraint can be effectively used to mitigate the risk of falls and/or manage challenging behaviours, and that comprehensive assessment is required to determine the most effective management strategy.

Use of restraint poses a range of risks that necessitates intensive and ongoing monitoring by staff. Most SRS would not have staff able to satisfy accepted guidelines in relation to such monitoring, such as those issued by the Australian Society of Geriatric Medicine:

<http://www.anzsgm.org/documents/POSITIONSTATEMENTNO2.PhysicalRestraint-Revision.pdf>

If a resident's needs increase, for example due to an increased risk of falls and or challenging behaviours, it is essential that the resident's care needs be reassessed by relevant practitioners. If their needs can no longer be met by the SRS, the resident must be relocated to a setting that is able to do so.

Contact

All correspondence to:

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Melbourne, Vic 3001.

03) 9096 8001 or email

Shannon.checklin@health.vic.gov.au

Tips for surviving hot summer days

Summer can mean days of continuous high temperatures or **Heat waves**. After about the second day of a heat wave buildings can heat up and the heat of the day remains during the night making sleep almost impossible for many people.

Keep the air moving

Keeping a breeze flowing through buildings and bedrooms can be difficult. During the early days of a heat wave it may be better to keep windows closed. Some buildings take several days to heat up. When they do heat up the buildings stay that way even after the arrival of a cool change.

If you don't have air conditioners, fans can be a good way to move air around and create a breeze. They are fairly cheap to buy.

Keep the fluids up

The body requires about three litres of water per day to function properly. If we do not keep up our water intake we start losing concentration, become tired and eventually cranky. It is important to drink as much water as possible, especially on really hot days. Remember, alcohol and most teas and coffee dehydrate the body so try to keep intake to a minimum on really hot days.

Find a cool place

Escaping to a place where it is cool may be one way of escaping the hot days. The beach may be alright for some people but it will not be for others.

Libraries and shopping malls are places that are normally air conditioned and nice and cool during summer. You can at least relax for a little while.

This information has been adapted from the Port Phillip Community Group. <http://www.ppcg.org.au/home-page>



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