



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Community Residential Care Facilities  
December 15, 2023 Nursing Homes  
Renal Dialysis Facilities  
Intermediate Care Facilities for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities  
Hospice Facilities  
Facilities for Chemically Dependent or Addicted Persons

**FROM:** Healthcare Quality  
Bureau of Community Care  
Division of Fire and Life Safety

**SUBJECT:** Laundry Fires

The Department of Health and Environmental Control's ("DHEC") Division of Fire and Life Safety in the Bureau of Community Care has received **eight** reports from facilities sustaining fires involving improper handling of laundry during 2023. While no injuries were reported, these incidents required patients and residents to evacuate for brief periods of time. In addition, all of the facilities suffered damage.

Due to the number of recent incidents, DHEC is sharing the following tips on laundry fire prevention:

- Dryer vents and exhaust ducts should be cleaned according to manufacturer's specifications;
- Lint filters should be changed after each load;
- Dryer cool-down cycles should be enabled;
- When hot laundry is removed, it should be allowed to cool before folding and storing;
- Hot laundry should not be placed in a bin or pile;
- Oil-soaked towels and mop heads should not be dried on hot temperatures;
- Oil-soaked towels should be placed in an appropriate container and away from heat sources;
- Hot fabric, when not allowed to cool properly, can continue to heat until combustion occurs.

Questions about this memo or other fire and life safety issues can be directed to Todd McAlhany, Director of the Division of Fire and Life Safety, at [mcalhadt@dhec.sc.gov](mailto:mcalhadt@dhec.sc.gov) or (803) 465-1273. As required by regulation, facilities must report all fires to the Department. The Department requests facilities submit such reports via email at [firewatch@dhec.sc.gov](mailto:firewatch@dhec.sc.gov). Facilities must also ensure their disaster/emergency evacuation plans are up-to-date and in accordance with respective the respective regulations.