



## MEMORANDUM

## Quality Management

Sheila McBain, Ph.D., Deputy Commissioner

**TO:** Executive Directors of Voluntary Providers

**FROM:** Sheila McBain, Ph.D. *Sheila M. McBain*  
Deputy Commissioner  
Division of Quality Management

**DATE:** February 22, 2010

**SUBJECT:** Potential Fire Hazards

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Recently two fires have occurred at program sites within New York State that were determined to have started in a bathroom exhaust fan. One was as a result of a frayed wire and the most recent was caused by a burned out motor. Fortunately, everyone in both incidents was evacuated safely. It is recommended that the following actions be completed in the immediate future to enhance fire safety within program sites operated by your agency.

- Check all fan grilles and filters for dust or lint buildup. Clean or vacuum routinely and or as necessary.
- Verify that the light bulb wattage does not exceed the recommended fixture rating.
- Check for loose or bare power wiring.
- When cleaning and checking the fans or filters, listen to the fan. If there appears to be excessive noise or it is louder than normal it could indicate that the motor is overloaded. The unit should be taken out of service and closely examined to determine if replacement is indicated.

Ceiling exhaust fans prevent excessive steam and heat buildup and need to be operating at the specified manufacturers' capacity to prevent other problems from occurring. Exhaust fans for bathrooms must be UL listed and should be safe if properly maintained.

In addition to concerns about bathroom exhaust fans there have been reported occurrences of small fires as a result of lint build up in dryer exhaust systems. You should also be aware of this potential fire hazard and make sure lint traps are kept clean. Should you have any questions about either of these concerns please contact your Bureau of Program Certification Regional Office or OMRDD's Office of Safety and Security Services (607-337-7000).