



Everyone Goes Home “SAFE”!

HOT WEATHER PRECAUTIONS

Workers who are exposed to extreme heat or work in hot environments may be at risk of heat stress and you must understand the differences of heat illnesses. Exposure to extreme heat can result in occupational illnesses and injuries. Heat stress can result in heat stroke, heat exhaustion, heat cramps, or heat rashes. Heat can also increase the risk of injuries in workers as it may result in sweaty palms, fogged-up safety glasses, and dizziness. Workers at greater risk of heat stress include the elderly, individuals who are overweight, have heart disease or high blood pressure, or take medications that may be affected by extreme heat.

What are the signs of dehydration?

It is important to pay attention to signals of water loss and minimize the risk of dehydration by drinking plenty of fluids throughout the day--**before** thirst sets in. The effects of the body's loss of water are progressive: from simple thirst, then fatigue, weakness, delirium and if not treated, even death.

What should you drink and how much?

The most important fluid to consume is plain water, at least 8 to 12 + 8 ounce cups per day. If you are physically active, you should add one to three cups for each hour of activity. If you prefer a flavored beverage, milk and fruit juice are good options that provide other nutrients or try sports drinks or decaffeinated beverages (caffeine can act as a diuretic, causing water loss). Alcoholic beverages have a diuretic effect and promote water loss. Solid foods also provide a surprising amount of fluids so consider adding

some of the following to your summer diet: lettuce, melons, vegetables, citrus fruits, and dairy.

Heat Stroke

Heat stroke is the most serious heat-related disorder. It occurs when the body becomes unable to control its temperature: the body's temperature rises rapidly, the sweating mechanism fails, and the body is unable to cool down. When heat stroke occurs, the body temperature can rise to 106 degrees Fahrenheit or higher within 10 to 15 minutes. Heat stroke can cause death or permanent disability if emergency treatment is not given.

Symptoms:

Hot, dry skin (no sweating), hallucinations, chills, throbbing headache, high body temperature, confusion/dizziness and slurred speech may occur.

First Aid:

Take the following steps to treat a worker with heat stroke: Notify Safety and their supervisor. You can help by assisting the worker to a cool shaded area and fanning their body until medical assistance arrives.

Heat Exhaustion

Heat exhaustion is the body's response to an excessive loss of the water and salt, usually through excessive sweating. Workers most prone to heat exhaustion are those that are elderly, have high blood pressure, and those working in a hot environment.

Symptoms:

Heavy sweating, extreme weakness or

fatigue, dizziness, confusion, nausea, clammy, moist skin, pale or flushed complexion, muscle cramps, slightly elevated body temperature, fast and shallow breathing.

First Aid:

Report your condition to your supervisor or have someone report it. Have them rest in a cool, shaded or air-conditioned area. Have them drink plenty of water or other cool, nonalcoholic beverages. At home, have them take a cool shower, bath, or sponge bath.

Heat Cramps

Heat cramps usually affect workers who sweat a lot during strenuous activity. This sweating depletes the body's salt and moisture levels. Low salt levels in muscles causes painful cramps. Heat cramps may also be a symptom of heat exhaustion.

Symptoms:

Muscle pain or spasms usually in the abdomen, arms, or legs.

First Aid:

Report your condition to your supervisor. Stop all activity, and sit in a cool place. Drink clear juice or a sports beverage. Don't return to strenuous work for a few hours after the cramps subside. Seek medical attention if any of the following apply: The worker has heart problems. The worker is on a low-sodium diet.

Heat Rash

Heat rash is a skin irritation caused by excessive sweating during hot, humid weather.

Symptoms:

Symptoms of heat rash include: Heat rash looks like a red cluster of pimples or small blisters. It is more likely to occur on the neck and upper chest, in the groin, under the

breasts, and in elbow creases.

First Aid:

Workers experiencing heat rash should: Try to work in a cooler, less humid environment when possible. Keep the affected area dry. Dusting powder may be used to increase comfort.

Overall Recommendations

Workers should avoid exposure to extreme heat, sun exposure, and high humidity when possible. When these exposures cannot be avoided, workers should take the following steps to prevent heat stress:

- At home wear light-colored, loose-fitting, breathable clothing such as cotton. Avoid non-breathing synthetic clothing.
- Gradually build up to heavy work.
- Schedule heavy work during the coolest parts of the day. Take more breaks in extreme heat and humidity. Take breaks in the shade or a cool area when possible.
- Drink water frequently. Drink enough water that you never become thirsty.
- Avoid drinks with caffeine, alcohol, and large amounts of sugar.
- Be aware that protective clothing or personal protective equipment such as acid/caustic suits, flash suits, etc., may increase the risk of heat stress.
- When using additional PPE as mentioned above, there must be a rest/work procedure in place and enforced to ensure rest is taken and water is consumed in a timely fashion.