SAFETY BULLETIN #7

July 14, 2024

Heat Related Illnesses

Heat Illness



- ★ What is heat illness? The body's natural way to regulate its temperature is to increase the heart rate and sweat. When these aren't sufficient at keeping the body's core temperature from rising, the following illnesses can result:
- ★ Heat Cramps
  - ○ Symptoms: painful, brief muscle cramps; muscles may spasm or jerk involuntarily
  - ○ Medical Response: Hydrate, cool off in shade
- ★ Heat Exhaustion
  - ○ Symptoms: excessive thirst, weakness, headache, lightheadedness, nausea, dizziness
  - ○ Medical Response: stop work and get to a shaded area; consume water or electrolytes; do not leave individual unattended; do not allow individual to resume working for remainder of the day
- ★ Heat Stroke
  - ○ Symptoms: throbbing headache, **lack** of sweating, confusion, slurred speech, dry skin, seizures
  - ○ Medical Response: **Call 911 immediately**; move individual to shaded area; use cool water to lower body temperature by submersion or by continuous soaking with water hose; remove any unnecessary clothing/PPE; fan the individual until medical help arrives

Ways to protect yourself and team members

- ★ Hydrate! (Remember last month's safety bulletin?) In this heat, drink a cup of water every 15-20 min.
- ★ Have a designated cool down location (canopy tent, shade tree, etc) with ample cool water available
- ★ Take frequent breaks. Division & Project Leads to ensure additional breaks are taken by all team members when the National Weather Service issues heat advisories and excessive heat warnings
- ★ Wear a hat and loose-fitting, breathable clothing whenever possible
- ★ Modify work schedules to reduce heat exposure - rotate team members; shift certain tasks, such as welding, to early morning or late afternoon
- ★ Allow new team members extra breaks over the first several days to acclimate to the heat

Discussion Point:

- ★ Make a buddy system to help watch for signs of heat illness in teammates - Note your team's buddy system on the Tailgate Safety Bulletin Discussion Form.

Things you need to know:

- Heat illness can strike quickly. Stop working, get cool, and drink fluids.
- When treating severe heat illness, cooling is the first priority.
- Altered mental state can be a sign of heat stroke and requires immediate attention.
- Muscle cramps, pain, or spasms in the abdomen, arms, or legs—alone or with any symptom—should not be ignored.
- Never leave a worker with heat illness alone.



HEAT STRESS
First Aid for Heat Illness

Cooling is key. Know the symptoms and treatment of heat illness.*

Symptoms can occur in any order. You don't need to have all of the symptoms in a category to have heat illness.

	Signs and Symptoms	What to Do
Heat Rash/ Prickly Heat	• Red cluster of pimples or small blisters, usually on neck, upper chest, groin, under breasts, and in elbow creases • Extensive areas of skin that do not sweat on heat exposure, but present a gooseflesh appearance that subsides with cool environments	• When possible, a cooler, less humid work environment is the best treatment • Keep rash area dry • Do not use ointments or creams, as they may impair cooling—warm, moist skin can make the rash worse
Heat Cramps	• Muscle cramps, pain, or spasms in the abdomen, arms, or legs	• Drink fluids every 15 to 20 minutes and eat a snack or sports drink • Avoid salt tablets, but drinks containing electrolytes are OK • Get medical help if the worker has heart problems, is on a low sodium diet, or if cramps do not subside within 1 hour
Heat Syncope (Fainting)	• Fainting, dizziness, or light-headedness after standing or suddenly rising from a sitting/lying position	• Sit or lie down in a cool place when beginning to feel faint or dizzy • Slowly drink water or clear juice
Heat Exhaustion	• Headache • Nausea • Dizziness, weakness • Irritability • Thirst, heavy sweating • Elevated body temperature • Decreased urine output	• Call for medical help or take worker to a health facility for evaluation and treatment • Stay with worker until help arrives • Remove worker from hot area and give liquids to drink • Remove unnecessary clothing, including shoes and socks • Cool worker with water, cold compresses, an ice bath, or fans • Encourage frequent sips of cool water

Exertional Heat Stroke	• Confusion, altered mental state, slurred speech, loss of consciousness
	• Hot, dry skin or profuse sweating
	• Seizures
	• Very high body temperatures
	• Fatal if treatment delayed
		• This is an emergency! Call for emergency care immediately!
		• Move worker to a cool area and remove clothing
		• Immerse worker in a tub of ice water
		• If a tub is not available, place worker in a tarp with ice and water (e.g., tarp-assisted cooling with oscillation†)
		• If cold-water immersion is not possible,
		  • Soak worker with cold water from a hose or shower
		  • Apply cold, wet towels to as much of the skin as possible, and replace towels frequently

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health