



Weekly Safety Meeting

Your Safety Is Our Business®

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Hot and Hazardous: Heat Illness Can be Deadly

Heat can be a real danger for workers during the summer, especially those who work outdoors. Heat illness should be viewed as a serious health problem - one that can even be fatal.

For many people, summer heat is uncomfortable. But for some it can be downright dangerous.

Each year OSHA reports that thousands of outdoor workers experience heat illness that often manifests as heat exhaustion. If not quickly addressed, heat exhaustion can become heat stroke, which killed more than 30 workers last year.

As we move into the summer months, it is very important for workers and employers to take the steps necessary to stay safe in extreme heat. Drinking water often, 1 quart or four 8-ounce cups, taking breaks, and limiting time in the heat are simple and effective ways to prevent heat illness.

What Makes Heat a Health Problem?

Heat illness is the result of the body overheating, much the way your car can overheat in hot weather.

Normally, your "coolant" system prevents overheating. You perspire, and as the perspiration evaporates, it cools your skin, cooling your body and maintaining the proper body temperature. Blood vessels also play a role, bringing heat to the skin surface and releasing it from the body.

But when you're working or playing hard in the heat, and particularly when it's also humid, your coolant system can breakdown. It'll breakdown first if you're past middle age or if you have health problems. But eventually on hot days, even young, healthy people can be stricken.

When the body's cooling system can't keep up with the heat, heart rate rises along with body temperature, increasing the risk of heart attack in people with heart disease.

Heat also affects the brain. A rise in body temperature of as little as 2 degrees can negatively impact brain function, making heat an underlying cause of job accidents. As workers overheat, their diminished brain function can cause them to overlook hazards and make mistakes. A 5 degrees rise in body temperature can be fatal.

Signs of Trouble

The hotter it gets, the more stress on the body. The first signs of trouble include symptoms such as:

- Fatigue
- Thirst
- Discomfort
- Lightheadedness

Simple heat stress, however, can quickly become heat exhaustion if early symptoms are ignored.



Symptoms of heat exhaustion include:

- Pale or flushed appearance
- Moist, clammy skin
- Weakness
- Dizziness
- Headache
- Nausea

A person suffering from heat stroke:

- Stops sweating and has hot, dry, reddish skin
- Has a rapid pulse and feels hot to the touch
- May become confused or delirious
- May suffer convulsions
- May become unconscious

Twenty percent of heat stroke victims die. Those who survive may suffer brain and kidney damage.

Your good health is your greatest wealth!!



Safety Meeting Sign-In Sheet

Supervisor:	Subject:
Location:	Date:
Conducted By:	Trainer Signature:

Name (print clearly)	Signature	Comments / Safety Concerns / Training Requests