



# Weekly Safety Meeting

*Your Safety Is Our Business®*

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## Hot and Hazardous

You're saying to yourself that you have heard all about heat stress before and nothing has changed. But yes, some things have changed. You are older and more susceptible to heat stress. Your crew may have new members who have never heard about heat stress. Your crew may have members who have heard about heat stress but have forgotten what they should remember. Heat stress presents both safety problems and health problems. Either of which can result in a loss. Certain safety problems are common to hot environments. Heat tends to promote accidents due to the slipperiness of sweaty palms, dizziness, or the fogging of safety glasses. Wherever hot surfaces, steam, etc., exist, the possibility of burns from accidental contact also exists. Excessive exposure to a hot work environment can bring about a variety of heat-induced disorders ranging in severity from an irritating heat rash (prickly heat) to heat stroke, a life threatening condition that can quickly result in brain damage or death. Heat stress contributes to the loss of productivity and workplace injuries, but it can be controlled. Simple precautionary measures and the exertion of leadership will protect workers from sustaining heat stress injuries. Don't surrender to Mother Nature!

### What Is Heat Stress?

It's a signal that says the body is having difficulty maintaining its narrow temperature range. The heart pumps faster, blood is diverted from internal organs to the skin, breathing rate increases, sweating increases, all in an attempt to transfer more heat to the outside air and cool the skin by evaporation of sweat. If the body can't keep up then the person suffers effects ranging from heat cramps to heat exhaustion, and finally to heat stroke.

### Hazards and Solutions

Being dry (clothes and skin) doesn't mean you're not sweating! In dry climates you might not feel wet or sticky, but you are still sweating. On a very warm day you can lose as much as two liters of fluid.

Beat the heat. Help prevent the ill effects of heat stress by:

- Drinking water frequently and moderately (every 15-20 minutes, at least 8 ounces); due to the fact that most of us already consume excessive salt in our diets; salt tablets are NOT recommended for general use;
- Resting frequently;
- Eating lightly;
- Doing more strenuous jobs during the cooler morning hours;
- Utilizing the ventilation or fans in enclosed area;
- Remembering that it takes about 1-2 weeks for the body to adjust to the heat; this adaptation to heat is quickly lost - so your body will need time to adjust after a vacation too;



- Avoiding alcohol consumption; many cases of heat stroke have occurred the day after a "night on the town;" and
- Wearing light colored, cotton clothes, and keeping your shirt on—desert nomads don't wear all those clothes for no reason.

**Answer the following questions and determine how well prepared you and your crew are to minimize the risk of heat injury this summer.**

- Are you aware that your diet (high sodium) and general state of health (lack of adequate rest) can contribute to heat injuries?
- During excessively hot days do you alter your work hours to take advantage of the cooler hours of daylight?
- During hot weather do you and your crew members take more frequent rest breaks in a cooler, shady area to temporarily recover from the heat?
- Are ample supplies of cold water available to everyone at the worksite?
- Does everyone know the signs and symptoms of heat stress and does everyone have a "buddy" who they watch for these symptoms?
- If someone was overcome by the heat, what would you do?

**Try to practice prevention - it's the name of the game - and it will keep you from becoming a victim of a heat-related illness.**



## Safety Meeting Sign-In Sheet

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

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