



Weekly Safety Meeting

Heat is Coming

Summer is coming soon and the temperatures are beginning to rise. So too does the risk of heat illness. Heat-related deaths and illness are preventable, yet every year many people will succumb to the effects of heat.

Heat-related illness is also an underlying cause of a high percentage of non-fatal incidents.

People suffer from heat-related illness when their bodies are unable to compensate and properly cool themselves. The body normally cools itself by sweating. Under certain conditions, sweating will fail to cool the body and the storage of heat over time will lead to the signs and symptoms of heat illness.

Heat Illness Prevention:

Minimize Heat - Probably one of the best ways to avoid heat stress is to minimize the heat in the workplace. However, this can be especially difficult when the workplace itself is outdoors and little or no shade is available to help reduce exposure.

Gradual Adjustment - The best way to prepare the body for heat is through gradual adjustment. This adjustment usually takes from 5-7 days, during which the body will undergo a series of changes that will make continued exposure to heat more endurable.

Gradual Exposure - Gradual exposure to heat gives the body time to become acclimatized to higher environmental temperatures. Heat-related illness is more likely to occur among workers that have not been given ample time to adjust to working in the heat.

Preventive Measures:

As the heat index begins to climb to dangerous levels, precautions must be taken to avoid the possibility of a heat-related illness. Staying indoors in air-conditioned areas should be considered whenever possible.

Should it be necessary to go outside for prolonged periods during peak temperatures:

- Acclimate to the heat, limit the amount of time spent in the heat.
- Hydrate your body, drinking more fluids before, during, and after exposure to heat.
- Hydrate your body, before you become thirsty. Drink 3 to 4 cups of water every hour starting at the beginning of the shift.

- Avoid choosing the wrong drinks (liquids that contain alcohol, caffeine, or large amounts of sugar - they cause your body to lose more fluid).
- Avoid eating hot and heavy meals. Eat light meals.
- Choose lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing to wear.
- Protect your body from the sun. Wear wide-brimmed hats. Apply sunscreen of SPF 15 or higher. Take frequent rest breaks in a cool, shaded area.
- Avoid overexerting your body. Slow down and avoid strenuous activity.
- Become familiar with the early warning signs and symptoms of the various heat-related illnesses.

Remember

Your best defense against heat-related illness is prevention. Staying cool and making simple changes in fluid intake, activities, and clothing during hot weather can help you to remain safe and healthy.

THE HEAT IS COMING! STAY HYDRATED!

