

## Toolbox Safety Topic

### Heat Stress

- I. Operations involving high air temperatures, radiant heat sources, high humidity, direct physical contact with hot objects, or strenuous physical activities have a high potential for inducing heat stress in employees engaged in such operations. Outdoor operations conducted in hot weather, especially those that require workers to wear semi-permeable or impermeable protective clothing, are likely to cause heat stress among exposed workers.
- II. Age, weight, degree of physical fitness, degree of acclimatization (being accustomed to the temperature), metabolism, use of alcohol or drugs, and a variety of medical conditions such as hypertension all affect a person's sensitivity to heat. Even the type of clothing worn must be considered.
- III. Does anyone know the difference between "heat exhaustion" and "heat stroke"?

Heat stress occurs when the body is unable to cool itself through sweating. The most common heat-induced illnesses are heat exhaustion and heat stroke. If left untreated, heat exhaustion could progress to heat stroke, and possible death.

Heat exhaustion symptoms include: headaches, dizziness, lightheadedness, weakness, mood changes such as irritability, confusion, or the inability to think straight, upset stomach, vomiting, fainting or passing out, and **pale, clammy skin**.

Heat stroke is a medical emergency! Symptoms include: dry, pale skin with **no sweating**, hot, red skin that looks sunburned, mood changes such as irritability, confusion, or the inability to think straight, **seizures** or fits, and **unconsciousness** with no response.

- IV. You can protect yourself and coworkers by:
  - ✓ Recognizing the signs and symptoms listed above and responding properly.
  - ✓ Performing the heaviest work during the coolest part of the day.
  - ✓ Build up tolerance to the heat slowly (this usually takes about 2 weeks).
  - ✓ Drink plenty of cool water, about 1 cup every 15-20 minutes. Caffeine, high sugar sodas, and alcohol actually work against the body in high temperatures.
  - ✓ Wear light, loose-fitting, breathable clothing, such as cotton.
  - ✓ Take frequent, short breaks in a cool, shaded area to allow the body to cool down.
  - ✓ Avoid eating large meals before working in hot environments.
  - ✓ Know if any of your medications can affect you when working in hot environments.
- V. If you (or a coworker) are showing signs of heat exhaustion, you should:
  - Act immediately. If not treated, heat exhaustion may advance to heat stroke or death.
  - Move them to a cool, shaded area to rest. Do not leave them alone.
  - If symptoms include dizziness or lightheadedness, lay the victim on his or her back and raise the legs 6-8 inches.
  - If symptoms include nausea or upset stomach, lay the victim on his or her side.
  - Loosen and remove any heavy clothing.
  - Have the person drink cool water unless they're sick to their stomach.
  - Cool the person by fanning and spraying with a cool mist of water, or applying a wet cloth to the person's skin (neck, forehead, cheeks, etc.).
  - Call 911 for help if the person does not feel better in a few minutes.

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If a coworker is showing signs of heat stroke, you should:

- **Call 911 immediately.**
- Move them to a cool, shaded area to rest. Do not leave them alone.
- If symptoms include dizziness or lightheadedness, lay the victim on his or her back and raise the legs 6-8 inches.
- If symptoms include nausea or upset stomach, lay the victim on his or her side.
- Loosen and remove any heavy clothing.
- Have the person drink cool water unless they're sick to their stomach.
- Cool the person by fanning and spraying with a cool mist of water, or applying a wet cloth to the person's skin (neck, forehead, cheeks, etc.).
- **Place ice packs under the armpits and groin area.**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting Conducted By: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

### Attendees

#	NAME	#	NAME
1		18	
2		19	
3		20	
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