



SAFETY TIPS ON HEAT STRESS

INTRODUCTION

Your body is affected by heat stress on the job more than you might think. A hot environment with high humidity may overload your body with heat. This stress can result in a series of disorders ranging from sunburn to serious heat stroke.

MINOR HEAT-STRESS DISORDERS

Heat Rash

Heat rash, can keep your body from releasing heat. It occurs in humid conditions when perspiration cannot evaporate from the skin. To prevent heat rash:

- Keep skin dry and clean.
- Wear loose-fitting clothing.

Sunburn

Sunburn can stop our body from thermoregulation efficiently. To minimize harmful sun exposure:

- Apply sunscreen both before & during work in the sun.
- Work in the shade whenever possible.
- If you are sunburned, stay out of the sun as much as possible.

MAJOR HEAT-STRESS DISORDERS

Heat Cramps

Heat cramps are severe muscle cramps. They occur when your body's cellular fluid is depleted through perspiration, cooling or decreased mineral content. Heat cramps cause your arms, legs or abdominal muscles to cramp while working or later when relaxing. If you or a co-worker is suffering from heat cramps:

- Move into the shade.
- Drink lightly (one quarter teaspoon of salt per quart of water) salted water.

Heat Exhaustion

Heat exhaustion occurs when your body's thermoregulation is overwhelmed but not completely broken down. ***Heat-exhaustion victims must be given immediate medical attention.***

Heat exhaustion symptoms may include:

- Clammy, cool moist & pail skin
- Fatigue or weakness
- Heavy perspiration
- Intense thirst from dehydration
- Low to normal blood pressure
- Anxiety or agitation
- Clouded senses or impaired judgment
- Fainting or loss of coordination
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea or vomiting
- Rapid breathing
- Slightly low oral temperature

If you suspect heat exhaustion:

- Move the victim into the shade
- Remove or loosen clothing & boots
- Fan the victim
- Elevate the victim's legs
- Massage the victim's limbs
- Give the victim lightly salted water
- Pour water & ice on the victim
- Stay until medical help arrives

Heat Stroke

Heat stroke is the most severe of the heat disorders. *Heat stroke is a life-threatening emergency that requires immediate medical attention.*

Early symptoms:

- High body temperature of 105 degrees F & above
- No perspiration on skin
- Hot, red or flushed skin
- Rapid pulse
- Difficulty breathing
- Constricted pupils
- High Blood pressure
- Headache or dizziness
- Confusion or disorientation
- Weakness
- Nausea or vomiting

Advanced symptoms:

- Seizure or convulsions
- Collapse
- Loss of consciousness
- Deep coma
- No detectable pulse
- Body temperature over 108 degrees F

Controlling Heat Stress

In addition to recognizing signs of heat stress and knowing first-aid measures, you can prevent heat-stress disorder through:

- Gradually getting used to the environment
- Proper work procedures (scheduled work/rest cycles-in this case rest means minimal activity, not stopping work completely; alternating light & heavy work or indoor and outdoor work; rotating work among work teams, etc.)
- Proper food and water intake

SUMMARY

To work safely in hot environments:

- Be aware of environmental heat and its consequences.
- Take in enough fluid and minerals to prevent hyperthermia.
- Follow suggested work/rest cycles until you are fully acclimated to the environment. If you or a co-worker suffers symptoms of heat stress, follow accepted first-aid procedures.

Heat Exhaustion and Heat Stroke

- Move the victim into the shade.
- Call for medical help.
- Remove or loosen boots & clothing.
- Pour water & ice on the victim.
- Fan the victim.
- Elevate the victim's legs.
- Massage the victim's arms & legs.
- If victim is conscious, give the victim lightly salted water.
- Stay until medical help arrives.

IMPORTANT: A victim's body temperature must be lowered as quickly as possible when suffering from heat stress. Applying ice to armpits, wrists, elbows and back of the knees may reduce the possibility of permanent brain damage.