



Managing Change - Weather -

There are often dramatic changes in the climate from season to season in the locations where we do business. The summer months bring hotter temperatures and storms that may become severe. It is important to understand the weather patterns in your local area to plan for weather-related hazards.

Each telecommunications contractor should maintain and implement a severe weather program. Expectations should be detailed to guide the actions of the crews when faced with inclement weather. Weather events to be addressed in the plan include:

- Rain
- High winds
- Lightning
- Heat
- Cold
- Snow
- Ice
- Other weather related hazards

Construction crews and supervisors should be aware of the program and expectations. In addition to these guidelines, they will need to make self-evaluations on a situational basis. For example, a seasoned climber may feel comfortable climbing in higher winds than a less experienced employee. Each member of the crew should assess personal limitations— whenever he/she feels at risk, stop work and discuss the issue with a supervisor.

July and August are typically the hottest months of the year. Below are a few tips on staying safe in the heat and minimizing the threat from thunderstorms.

Heat Stress

Signs of Heat Illnesses

- Heat Cramps – Cramps in the muscles of the arms, legs or abdomen, although brief or periodic.
- Heat Exhaustion – Weakness, tiredness, occasional headaches, thirst, dizziness, nausea, fainting and overly moist skin.
- Heat Stroke – Delirium, confusion, convulsions, loss of consciousness, cool and dry skin

Key elements for controlling heat stress

- Drink one glass of water every 15 to 30 minutes worked, depending on the heat and humidity. This is the best way to replace lost body fluid.
- Read medication labels to know how they cause the body to react to the sun and heat.
- Avoid alcohol, caffeine and drugs as they can increase the effects of heat.
- For more information, review the June 25, 2007, toolbox talk “Preventing Heat Stress”

Lightning Safety Tips

- Avoid water.
- Avoid the high ground.
- Avoid open spaces.
- Avoid all metal objects.
- Where possible, find shelter in a substantial building or in a metal vehicle such as a truck or a van with the windows completely shut.
- Visit the National Weather Service website for more information on summer storms:
<http://www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov/overview.htm>

