

June 22, 2009 Toolbox Talk

Health-The Summer Heat

The Summer Heat

Now that summer is here with its elevated temperatures, it's a great time to enjoy the outdoors provided you remember that outdoor activities have certain health risks. A little extra care and planning can keep you safe this summer both at work and at play.

Protect yourself against heat stress

When the body is unable to cool itself by sweating, several heat-induced illnesses such as heat exhaustion and the more severe heat stroke can occur, and can result in death.

Factors leading to heat stress include:

- △ High temperature and humidity
- △ Direct sun or heat
- △ Limited air movement
- △ Physical exertion
- △ Poor physical condition
- △ Some medicines
- △ and, inadequate tolerance for hot places

Preventing heat stress:

- △ Know signs/symptoms of heat-related illnesses; monitor yourself and coworkers or family
- △ Block out direct sun or other heat sources
- △ Use cooling fans/air-conditioning; rest regularly
- △ Drink lots of water; about 1 cup every 15 minutes
- △ Wear lightweight, light colored, loose-fitting clothes
- △ Avoid alcohol, caffeinated drinks, or heavy meals

Symptoms of Heat Exhaustion and Heat Stroke:

Symptoms of HEAT EXHAUSTION

- △ Headaches, dizziness, lightheadedness or fainting
- △ Weakness and moist skin
- △ Mood changes such irritability or confusion
- △ Upset stomach or vomiting

Symptoms of HEAT STROKE

- △ Dry, hot skin with no sweating
- △ Mental confusion or losing consciousness
- △ Seizures or convulsions

What to do for Heat-Related Illness:

**** Call 911 (or the local emergency number) at once ****

While waiting for help to arrive:

- △ Move the person to a cool, shaded area
- △ Loosen or remove heavy clothing
- △ Provide cool drinking water
- △ Fan and mist the person with water

Sources

United States Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)