

Heat Illness Prevention

(Adapted from <http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/heatillness/index.html#affected>)

Refer to sign-in sheet for attendees (note: a separate meeting should be held with all absent employees).

1. Overview:

Heat is a serious hazard in the workplace. Heat related illness if not attended to can lead to serious and life-threatening injuries.

2. Problem Description:

Workers generate body heat through their normal work activities and the body releases heat by sweating. During hot weather, especially with high humidity, sweating isn't enough and body temperature can rise to dangerous levels. This is intensified during times of excursion and/or while wearing insulating clothing. Some workers might be at greater risk than others until they become acclimatized to working in hot conditions such as new workers, workers returning from work after being off for a week or more and all workers during an extreme ambient temperature heat waves. If workers do not understand the affects of heat on the body and take proper precautions serious heat illness and even death can occur.

3. Symptoms and Treatment of the 3 Stages of Heat Illness:

Heat Illness typically occurs in three stages although the progression from one stage to the next can be quick:

- **Stage 1: Heat Cramps**

- Severe muscle cramps in the legs and abdomen with excessive sweating
- Typically treated by moving to a cool shaded place and drinking small amounts of water
- If cramps do not subside seek medical treatment

- **Stage 2: Heat Exhaustion**

- More serious than heat cramps, the symptoms include: excessive sweating, dilated pupils, complaints of dizziness, blurred vision, headaches, and cramps. The person may also have cool, clammy skin, a weak rapid pulse, rapid shallow breathing, vomiting and may go unconscious.
- Give the person water to drink, as much as they will take. If they vomit, do not give them anything by mouth and seek medical attention right away. Place them laying down with the feet elevated in a cool place and remove any excessive clothing and loosen clothing around the neck and waist. If they go unconscious seek immediate medical treatment.

- **Stage 3: Heatstroke**

- This is a life-threatening condition and without immediate action heatstroke can result in permanent brain damage or death. Symptoms include, a rapid and full pulse that gets weaker and harder to feel in later stages, noisy breathing, flushed skin, hot and dry skin or hot and sweaty skin (when heatstroke is related to exertion), restlessness, headache, fatigue, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, convulsions and eventually unconsciousness.
- If heatstroke is suspected, seek immediate medical treatment.

If there is any doubt about the extent of the heat illness, seek immediate medical attention.

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4. Summary:

Employers should have a written heat illness prevention plan and implement and train employees on the plan provisions. How can heat illness be prevented? Remember three simple words: water, rest, shade. Drinking water often, taking breaks, and limiting time in the heat can help prevent heat illness. Gradually build up to work in hot conditions. This helps you build tolerance to the heat, or become acclimated. Also, it's important to know and look out for the symptoms of heat illness in yourself and your co-workers during hot weather. Plan for an emergency and know what to do — acting quickly can save lives!

5. Discussion:

- Where does the heat come from that causes our bodies to overheat?
- What are some of the signs you may notice if your body is getting too hot?

6. RECAP/REVIEW:

- Heat illness can affect us all, but some people are at greater risk. What do you think would put a person at greater risk?

7. Reminder:

- Safety is the responsibility of both management and employees!

Next Safety Meeting is scheduled for _____ and the topic will be _____.

Take Exam / Review Results

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