

The "C-Change" Initiative:

1. Change behaviors.
2. Challenge ourselves to re-think how we work.
3. Certify the results on a daily basis.



# ***Tool Box Talk***

*Week of August the 9, 2010*

## ***Heat Stress Hazard Awareness***

This is our second of four Tool Box Talks that we will be discussing for the month of August. Our goal is to raise our awareness of heat related illness, and determine what measures we can take to prevent overexposure. This week we will be talking about the different types of heat related illnesses, symptoms and first aid treatment.

### **Heat Stroke**

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Heat stroke is the most serious heat-related illness. It occurs when the body becomes unable to control its temperature: the body's temperature rises rapidly, the sweating mechanism fails, and the body is unable to cool down. When heat stroke occurs, the body temperature can rise to 106 degrees Fahrenheit or higher within 10 to 15 minutes. Heat stroke can cause death or permanent disability if emergency treatment is not given.

#### **Symptoms:**

- Hot, dry skin (no sweating)
- Hallucinations
- Chills
- Throbbing headache
- High body temperature
- Confusion/dizziness
- Slurred speech

#### **First Aid/ Treatment:**

Take the following steps to treat a worker with heat stroke:

- Call 911 and notify their supervisor.
- Move the sick worker to a cool shaded area.
- Cool the worker using methods such as: soaking their clothes with water; spraying, sponging, or showering them with water; and fanning their body.

### **Heat Exhaustion**

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Heat exhaustion is the body's response to an excessive loss of the water and salt, usually through excessive sweating. Workers most prone to heat exhaustion are those that are elderly, have high blood pressure, and those working in a hot environment.

**Symptoms:**

- Heavy sweating
- Extreme weakness or fatigue
- Dizziness, confusion
- Nausea
- Clammy, moist skin
- Pale or flushed complexion
- Muscle cramps
- Slightly elevated body temperature
- Fast and shallow breathing

**First Aid/ Treatment:**

Treat a worker suffering from heat exhaustion with the following:

- Have them rest in a cool, shaded or air-conditioned area.
- Have them drink plenty of water or other cool, nonalcoholic beverages.
- Have them take a cool shower or bath.

**Heat Syncope**

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Heat syncope is a fainting (syncope) episode or dizziness that usually occurs with prolonged standing or sudden rising from a sitting or lying position. Factors that may contribute to heat syncope include dehydration and lack of acclimatization.

**Symptoms:**

- Light-headedness
- Dizziness
- Fainting

**First Aid/ Treatment:**

- Sit or lie down in a cool place when they begin to feel symptoms.
- Slowly drink water, clear juice.
- Recovery usually occurs within 5 - 10 minutes. Arrange for medical help if there is complete loss of consciousness or if fainting is accompanied by any other symptoms.

**Heat Cramps**

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Heat cramps usually affect workers who sweat a lot during strenuous activity. This sweating depletes the body's salt and moisture levels. Low salt levels in muscles causes painful cramps. Heat cramps may also be a symptom of heat exhaustion.

**Symptoms:**

Muscle pain or spasms usually in the abdomen, arms, or legs.

**First Aid/ Treatment:**

Workers with heat cramps should:

- Stop all activity, and sit in a cool place.
- Drink clear juice or a sports beverage.
- Do not return to strenuous work for a few hours after the cramps subside because further exertion may lead to heat exhaustion or heat stroke.
- Seek medical attention if any of the following apply; the worker has heart problems; the worker is on a low-sodium diet; and the cramps do not subside within one hour.

**Heat Rash**

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Heat rash is a skin irritation caused by excessive sweating during hot, humid weather.

**Symptoms:**

- Heat rash looks like a red cluster of pimples or small blisters.
- It is more likely to occur on the neck and upper chest, in the groin, under the breasts, and in elbow creases.

**First Aid/ Treatment:**

Workers experiencing heat rash should:

- Try to work in a cooler, less humid environment when possible.
- Keep the affected area dry.
- Dusting powder may be used to increase comfort.

Next week we will cover steps on how to keep from being overexposed.