

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 16, 2010

Heat Related Illness Awareness

This is our third 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 methods used to control overexposure.

When supervising work in summer months you should take the following steps to protect workers from overexposure to heat:

- Schedule maintenance and repair jobs in hot areas for cooler months.
- Schedule hot jobs for the cooler part of the day.
- Acclimatize workers by exposing them for progressively longer periods to hot work environments.
- Reduce the physical demands of workers.
- Use relief workers or assign extra workers for physically demanding jobs.
- Provide cool water or liquids to workers.
- Avoid drinks with caffeine, alcohol, or large amounts of sugar.
- Provide rest periods with water breaks.
- Provide cool areas for use during break periods.
- Monitor workers who are at risk of heat stress.

When working you should avoid exposure to extreme heat, sun exposure, and high humidity when possible. When these exposures cannot be avoided, workers should take the following steps to prevent overexposure to heat:

- Wear light-colored, loose-fitting, breathable clothing such as cotton.
- Avoid non-breathing synthetic clothing.
- Gradually build up to heavy work.
- Schedule heavy work during the coolest parts of day.
- Take more breaks in extreme heat and humidity.
- Take breaks in the shade or a cool area when possible.
- Drink water frequently. Drink enough water that you never become thirsty.
- Avoid drinks with caffeine, alcohol, and large amounts of sugar.
- Monitor your physical condition and that of your coworkers.