



HEAT STRESS SAFETY

TOOLBOX TALK SERIES – ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

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It's essential for all of us to understand the risks associated with working in hot environments and how to protect ourselves.

Why it's important: Heat stress can be a serious health concern. It occurs when our bodies are unable to regulate their internal temperature due to excessive heat exposure. This can lead to heat-related illnesses such as heat exhaustion and heat stroke, which can be life-threatening if not treated promptly.

Recognizing the signs: It's crucial to recognize the early signs of heat-related illnesses:

- **Heat Exhaustion:** Symptoms include heavy sweating, weakness, dizziness, nausea, headache, and fainting.
- **Heat Stroke:** This is a medical emergency. Symptoms include high body temperature (above 103°F), hot and dry skin (no sweating), rapid pulse, confusion, and unconsciousness.



Prevention tips:

1. **Hydration:** Drink plenty of water throughout the day, even if you don't feel thirsty. Avoid sugary drinks and alcohol.
2. **Rest breaks:** Take frequent breaks in shaded or cool areas. Schedule the most physically demanding tasks for cooler times of the day.
3. **Clothing:** Wear lightweight, loose-fitting, and light-colored clothing that allows your body to cool down efficiently. Consider wearing a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses.
4. **Sunscreen:** Apply sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher, even on cloudy days. Reapply every two hours or more often if sweating heavily.
5. **Acclimatization:** Allow new or returning workers time to gradually build up their tolerance to working in the heat.



Worksite considerations:

- Ensure there are shaded areas or portable shelters available for breaks.
- Monitor weather forecasts and adjust work schedules accordingly during extreme heat conditions.
- Encourage colleagues to watch out for each other and recognize the signs of heat stress.

Emergency response:

- If someone shows signs of heat-related illness, move them to a cooler area immediately.
- Provide cool water to drink and cool them down with wet cloths or ice packs.
- Call emergency services if someone shows signs of heat stroke (such as confusion or unconsciousness).



Conclusion: Remember, heat stress is preventable if we stay informed and take necessary precautions. By looking out for ourselves and each other, we can ensure a safe and productive summer. If you have any questions or concerns about heat stress safety, please don't hesitate to ask. Stay safe out there!

