

# Heat-Related Stress Toolbox Talk

## Heat-Related Stress

A serious medical condition resulting from the body's inability to cope with a particular heat load that can cause illness and death.

- ❖ Nearly 3 out of 4 heat illness fatalities happen during the first week of work. New and returning workers need to build tolerance to heat by easing into their work.



## Symptoms and First Aid

- Dehydration - fatigue, thirst, dry mouth and low energy
  - Move out of the sun, drink plenty of cool fluids
    - water or electrolyte drinks
- Heat Rash - clusters of red bumps on skin (appear on neck, upper chest and skin folds)
  - Press a cool cloth to the irritated skin, keep out of heat, avoid creams and ointments that may irritate the skin
- Heat Syncope - fainting and dizziness
  - Sit or lie down, drink cool fluids
- Heat Cramps - muscle spasms or pain (usually in legs, arms and trunk)
  - Rest in cool place and drink electrolyte drink
- Heat Exhaustion - fatigue, thirst, nausea or vomiting, dizziness, heavy sweating, elevated body temp or fast heart rate
  - Immerse person in cold water or ice bath
  - Stay out of heat/sun the rest of the day
  - Remove outer layers of clothing
  - Ensure person is monitored and call doctor if symptoms persist or increase
- Heat Stroke - confusion, slurred speech, unconsciousness, seizures, heavy sweating or hot, dry skin, very high body temp and rapid heart rate
  - Call 911 immediately and cool person down with ice or cold water



## Preventing Heat-Related Stress

- *Follow the 20% Rule* - on the 1st day, don't allow employees to work more than 20% of a shift at full intensity in the heat
  - Increase their time by no more than 20% a day until they are used to working in the heat
- *Provide Cool Drinking Water* - Drink water or drinks with electrolytes every 15 minutes
  - even when not thirsty - drink before, during and after work
- *Rest Breaks* - Take breaks in the shade or a cool environment to recover from the heat
- *Dress for the Heat* - wear a hat and light colored, breathable clothing
  - put on sunscreen if applicable
- *Watch out for each other and self* - monitor themselves and others for signs of heat illness
  - know the signs and symptoms of heat-related stress
  - when in doubt, call 911
- *Adjust the timing of certain activities* - if possible, schedule strenuous work activities during cooler parts of the day to reduce high heat exposure situations

