Heat Safety: Don’t Sweat the Heat, Get Cooled Off!

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 cool cloth to the irritated skin, keep out of heat, avoid creams and ointments that may irritate 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 to help with muscle aches.
- **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 911 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.

Heat Related Stress: 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.
- It’s important for new and returning workers to ease into their work in order to build tolerance to the hot environment.

Heat related illness can affect employees working in outdoor environments as well as indoor environments, depending on their job type.

Below are a few examples of outdoor and indoor environments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outdoors</th>
<th>Indoors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture – Tall Grass Prairie, Greenhouse</td>
<td>Kitchens and Laundry Rooms</td>
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<tr>
<td>Construction – road, roofing, and other outdoor work</td>
<td>Boiler Rooms</td>
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<td>Landscaping – grounds workers</td>
<td>Foundries</td>
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<td>Mail and Package Services</td>
<td>Steam Tunnels</td>
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Preventative Measures

- **Provide Training** – train employees to be aware of the signs & symptoms of heat illnesses and ways to prevent and protect yourself and others.

- **Adopt the 20% Rule** – on the 1st day of work or heat environment, don’t allow employees to work more than 20% of a shift at full intensity of the heat.
  - Increase their time by no more than 20% a day until they are used to working in the hot environment.

- **Rest Breaks** – take scheduled breaks in the shade or a cool environment to recover from the heat.
  - This could be under a tree, inside a building or even in a cooler or freezer if working in a kitchen, if approved.

- **Dress for the Heat** – wear light colored, breathable clothing.
  - Put on sunscreen if applicable.

- **Provide Cool Drinking Water** – drink water or drinks with electrolytes even when you are not thirsty.
  - Drink before, during and after working.
  - Avoid caffeine during the day.

- **Adjust the Timing of Certain Activities** – if possible, schedule strenuous work activities during cooler parts of day to reduce high heat exposure situations.
  - Mow or doing grounds work in morning instead of afternoon.

- **Watch Out for Each Other and Self** – monitor yourself and others for signs of heat illnesses.
  - Know the symptoms and first aid measures.
  - When in doubt, call 911.

❖ For more information contact Environmental Health & Safety Office ❖ [https://risk.uni.edu/](https://risk.uni.edu/) ❖ 319-273-5800