

## Heat Illness Prevention

Awareness of heat illness symptoms can save your life or the life of a co-worker. Personal factors that may contribute to heat illness, or make you more susceptible, include: Age, weight, level of fitness, medical condition, use of medications, and alcohol.

**Heat stroke** is the most serious heat-related health problem. It occurs when the body's temperature regulatory system fails and sweating becomes inadequate. A heat stroke victim's skin is hot, usually dry, red or spotted. Body temperature is usually 105 degrees F or higher, and the victim is mentally confused, delirious, perhaps in convulsions, shivering, or unconscious. Unless the victim receives quick and appropriate treatment, death can occur.

**Heat exhaustion** is caused by the loss of large amounts of body fluid by sweating. A person suffering from heat exhaustion still sweats but experiences extreme weakness or fatigue, giddiness, nausea, or headache. In more serious cases, the victim may vomit or lose consciousness. The skin is clammy and moist, the complexion is pale or flushed, and the body temperature is usually normal.

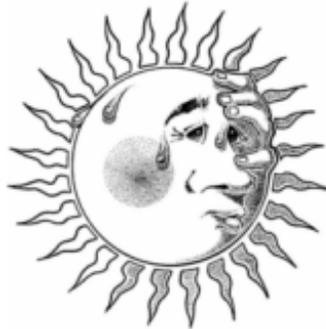
**Heat cramps** are painful spasms of the muscles that occur among those who sweat profusely in heat, drink large quantities of water, but do not adequately replace the body's salt loss. Drinking large quantities of water tends to dilute the body's fluids, while the body continues to lose salt.

**Fainting** may occur to a person not accustomed to hot environments and who stands erect and immobile in the heat. With enlarged blood vessels in the skin and in the lower part of the body due to the body's attempts to control internal temperature, blood may pool there rather than return to the heart to be pumped to the brain. Moving around prevents blood from pooling and prevents fainting.

**Transient heat fatigue** is a temporary state of discomfort caused by prolonged heat exposure. Symptoms include a decline in task performance, coordination, alertness, and vigilance.

**Medical Response:** Employees experiencing and/or displaying serious symptoms of heat illness must receive medical attention, and will be escorted to the nearest designated facility for treatment.

**Acclimatization:** People need time for their bodies to adjust to working in heat. This is particularly important for employees returning to work after (1) a prolonged absence, (2) recent illness, or (3) recently relocating from a cooler climate. If you believe that you need time to acclimate to the heat, please speak to your supervisor immediately.



## Smart Safety Rules

- ☞ Take time to acclimate yourself to the heat
- ☞ Take breaks in a cool shaded area.
- ☞ Don't eat heavy meals before working in the heat
- ☞ Don't drink alcohol or drinks with caffeine
- ☞ Cover as much of your body as possible (light colored clothing is recommended)
- ☞ Keep an eye on your co-workers
- ☞ Know and react to symptoms of heat-related health problems

## Drinking Water

During a day's work in the heat, a person may produce as much as 2 to 3 gallons of sweat. It is important that water intake during the workday be about equal to the amount of sweat produced. Don't depend on thirst to signal when and how much to drink. Workers should drink 3 to 4 cups of water every hour starting at the beginning of the shift.