



MSU-ES Dawg Tracks

May, 2014



Safety Tips: Heat Illnesses & Protection



Summer is almost here and it won't take long for us to forget the winter we just experienced. However, the sun and the heat are the necessary ingredients for crops, gardens, lawns, etc. That being said, we must respect the season. We also must take necessary precautions to protect ourselves from the effects of "too much of a good thing," extreme exposure to the heat and sun.

HEAT STRESS CAN BE VERY SERIOUS-

- Working outdoors in hot, humid weather can result in heat stress. Heat stress occurs when the body builds up more heat than it can handle.
- Outside work, like our agriculture work, exposes one to the sun and heat over long periods of time and makes one more susceptible to heat stress.
- Acute heat stress can be life-threatening and require immediate medical attention.
- Knowing what steps to take for a co-worker, who may be showing signs of heat stress, can be a life-saver by putting the exercises to use.

RECOGNIZING HEAT ILLNESSES-

- ✓ Heat illnesses are present in several different types: heat stroke, heat exhaustion, heat syncope and heat rash.
- ✓ Heat stroke, which happens suddenly, is the most life-threatening and requires immediate medical attention.
- ✓ Symptoms in heat illnesses vary in degrees depending upon the type, but generally the symptoms are almost the same.
- ✓ Following are some symptoms that are fairly common to all:
 - ~Exhaustion ~Headaches ~Nausea
 - ~Dizziness or fainting ~Confusion/Slurred speech
 - ~Muscle weakness ~Muscle/abdominal cramps
 - ~Loss of coordination ~Severe thirst/dry mouth
 - ~Aggressive/irrational behavior ~Chills
- ✓ **It is important to stay calm if you think a person is showing signs of heat stress.**

Remember: HIGH TEMPERATURE + HIGH HUMIDITY + PHYSICAL ACTIVITY= HEAT ILLNESS

DO-

- ❖ *Become familiar with the symptoms of heat-related illnesses.*
- ❖ *Quickly move the victim to a cool, shaded area.*
- ❖ *Cool the victim with cold water, using a sponge, spray or shower, whichever is available.*
- ❖ *Remember! Drink a lot of water before, during and after work to help reduce the potential for heat stress.*
- ❖ *Remove their outer layer of clothing, especially wet articles that might restrict the blood flow.*
- ❖ *In advance of the need – make sure that emergency phone numbers are posted in conspicuous locations for ready access.*
- ❖ *When in doubt – call for emergency medical service for help.*

RESPONSES TO HEAT ILLNESSES-

- ✓ Stop all physical activity.
- ✓ Move the victim to a cool or shaded area.
- ✓ Have someone call for immediate medical help (make sure that you have emergency phone numbers and 9-1-1 posted in conspicuous places). Make sure that either you or someone you know at the facility knows CPR/1st Aid and you can reach them quickly.
- ✓ Remove their outer clothing- hat, jacket, etc. as well as any personal protective equipment that they may have on. The jacket or other wet items of clothing may restrict the blood flow. If the victim has been spraying pesticides- don't touch the outer clothing, as it could be contaminated. A good idea is to put on gloves to be extra safe.
- ✓ Cool the victim off. If it is available, sponge, spray or shower the victim with cool water on their legs, face, neck, hands and forearms.
- ✓ If the victim is conscious and alert, have the person drink as much water or sports drinks as possible, but have them drink it slowly.
- ✓ Try to keep the victim calm and still until the EMTs arrive.

PROTECT YOURSELF-

- Get familiar with the symptoms of heat stress and the illnesses and what action to take to treat them.
- On hot days, don't spare the water! Drink often during the day and you might sprinkle hints of salt- eat salty foods. Don't use salt tablets.
- Wear clothing made of cotton with loose fit that allows air to pass through. Refrain from the use of synthetic fabrics. Wear a wide-brimmed hat to shade your face, nose and ears.
- In the early spring, start with light work and build up to high tolerance levels. Gauge your work habits and take sufficient breaks, especially in the extreme heat periods.
- Avoid drinks that contain caffeine, alcohol and large amounts of sugar

DON'T-

- *Forget to seek emergency medical help when you first suspect symptoms of heat stress.*
- *Touch the clothing of a victim if he has been spraying pesticides, with the possibility of their clothing being contaminated without gloves.*
- *Leave a person alone who may have a heat-related illness.*
- *Wear tight fitting clothing constructed of synthetic fabrics. (Cotton is better as it will breathe)*
- *Fail to wear a hat, so you are protecting your facial parts.*

BE CAREFUL WHEN USING PESTICIDES
YOU MAY END UP WITH THE WRONG
TYPE OF SHOWER
SAFE TODAY <><><><>
ALIVE TOMORROW <><><>