



ADJUSTING TO HOT OR COLD WORKING CONDITIONS

Toolbox Talks for the members of Iowa Association of Municipal Utilities

June 2015

Acclimatization is the process of gradually adjusting to an environmental change. This gradual process is necessary to prevent heat or cold-related illnesses and can take up to 2 weeks to complete, depending on a person's previous exposure. By exposing a person to tough environmental conditions in slowly increasing time increments, the stress on the body systems is lessened.

In order to keep our body's core temperature adjusted correctly, the thermostat in our brain tells the skin pores to open so that we can sweat or to close and preserve heat. By being acclimatized to our environment, the sweating and circulatory processes are at their peak efficiency.

Set up a buddy system so that symptoms of heat or cold stress may be recognized in the other person. Encourage frequent rest and cooling or warming periods. Plenty of fluids are necessary to keep the circulatory system working efficiently. Don't wait until you are thirsty to hydrate.

Seek medical treatment quickly if signs of heat stress or hypothermia do not respond to conventional first aid treatment.



Proper clothing is a critical component in avoiding heat or cold stress related illnesses.

Warm layers help to trap body heat in cold conditions and loose, light clothing allow the sweat to readily evaporate from our bodies in the heat.

Be aware of the warning signs of an environmental illness and take prompt action.