



AVOIDING HEAT STRESS

Toolbox Talks for the members of Iowa Association of Municipal Utilities

June 2015

Exposure to heat can make you sick or even kill you. Risk factors for heat stress include not being acclimated to the hot environment, high heat index, low liquid intake, physical labor and heavy clothing or certain types of personal protective equipment.

In order to keep our body's core temperature adjusted correctly and to protect our internal organs during hot conditions, the thermostat in our brain tells the skin pores to open so that we can sweat and release internal heat. We need to stay properly hydrated in order to have sufficient fluid for sweat. Remember to drink at least 1 pint of water or sports drink every hour.

Wear lightweight, light colored and loose fitting clothing. Take frequent rest and hydration breaks in an cool, shaded area.

It is important to recognize the symptoms of heat-related illnesses in yourself and others. There are several types of these illnesses but they have one thing in common—a quick response is necessary in order to prevent the condition from worsening.

Symptoms of heat stress include headache, dizziness, fainting, confusion, profuse sweating or vomiting. When the body stops sweating, it's temperature can rise so quickly that a heat stroke is likely. If you or a co-worker experience these symptoms, call for help immediately. Move the worker to a cool area, remove the outer layer of clothing and apply ice packs or cool, wet towels to the armpits and groin areas.

		Heat Index Chart																
		% Relative Humidity																
		15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	
T e m p e r a t u r e	110	108	112	117	123	130												
	105	102	105	108	113	117	122	130										
	100	97	98	102	104	107	110	115	120	126	132							
	95	91	93	95	96	98	100	104	106	109	113	119	124	130				
	90	86	87	88	90	91	92	95	97	98	100	103	106	110	114	117	121	
	85	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	92	94	96	97	100	102	
	80	76	77	78	78	79	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	
		Legend																
80-89 degrees		Fatigue is possible with prolonged exposure and/or physical activity.																
90-104 degrees		Sunstroke, heat cramps and heat exhaustion are possible with prolonged exposure and/or physical activity.																
105-129 degrees		Sunstroke, heat cramps and heat exhaustion are likely. Heat stroke is possible with prolonged exposure and/or physical activity.																
130+ degrees		Heatstroke/sunstroke is highly likely with continued exposure.																

Keep an eye on the heat index. During times of high humidity the sweat from our bodies is not removed quickly, creating that feeling of wearing a 'wet blanket'. This condition raises risk of a heat-related illness.

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