True or False: Working in Hot Weather

OSHA continues to emphasize the importance of protecting workers from the risk of heat exposure. See OSHA's webpage [Water, Rest, Shade](http://www.osha.gov). You can also find useful information in NLBMDA's [Working in Hot Weather: What to Know; What to Do](http://www.nlbmda.org). We use this "To Do List" to develop the following True or False statements. While elements on the To Do List and other OSHA materials are not specifically mandatory, each employer is expected under the General Duty Clause to provide and safe workplace to all workers.

1. As long as each worker knows to drink plenty of water, they really don't need to worry about heat exposure.

   False: OSHA materials emphasize the need of plenty of fresh water, but also the need to periodic rests in the shade in extreme heat. There is also evidence that workers may be more vulnerable to heat exhaustion when returning from an extended period away from work or working out of the heat.

2. All I need to tell my workers is that they should drink plenty or water and rest if they are feeling dizzy or sick to their stomachs.

   False: OSHA's Daily Checklist includes making sure plenty of fresh water is available throughout the day and that shaded areas are available during breaks, but it also recommends making sure everyone knows the signs of heat exhaustion and heat stroke, who to notify during an emergency, and how to provide first aid.

3. It is important for workers to know the difference between heat stroke and heat exhaustion.

   True: Heat Stroke is considered a medical emergency that can result in death. It is the most serious form of heat-related illness and occurs when the body becomes unable to regulate core temperature. Signs include confusion, loss of consciousness, and seizures. Heat exhaustion is the body's response to loss of water and salt from heavy sweating. Signs include headache, nausea, dizziness, heavy sweating. Other forms of heat-related illness are heat cramps and heat rash. A complete list of symptoms for both heat exhaustion and heat stroke may be found on OSHA's webpage on [Heat-related Illness and First Aid](http://www.osha.gov/heat).

4. It's best to drink small amounts of water at more frequent intervals rather than larger amounts less often.

   True: OSHA material recommends drinking small amounts of water every 15 minutes in extreme heat rather than larger amounts of water less frequently. It is also recommended that workers drink water before work to hydrate and after work to rehydrate.

5. If I don't feel thirsty while working in heat, that means I'm OK and don't need to hydrate or take a break.

   False: It is recommended hydrating often throughout the work day. It is also important to note that workers when in hot weather should avoid relying on sodas or drinks with caffeine to rehydrate.

6. Employees should know what specific protocol to follow if a worker or coworker experiences heat exhaustion or heat stroke.
True: The workplace protocol should include immediately notifying the supervisor if a worker is experiencing heat exhaustion or heat stroke. The protocol should also include moving the person to a cooler place to rest in the shade, and having someone stay with that person. Give the person water little by little, loosen clothing and remove outer clothing, and help cool the person down by fanning, using ice packs or soaking clothing with cool water.

7. The following are signs of heat stroke: cramps, nausea or vomiting, dizziness or fainting.

False: These are among the symptoms of heat exhaustion. A complete list of symptoms for both heat exhaustion and heat stroke may be found on OSHA's webpage on Heat-related Illness and First Aid.

8. If someone is having a heat stroke, call 911 immediately.

True: Heat stroke can be life threatening. Its symptoms can be one or more of the following: confusion, fainting, seizures, excessive sweating or red, hot dry skin, and very high body temperature.

9. If a worker is experiencing heat exhaustion, it's OK to provide cool water, rest and shade until he or she is ready to get back to work.

False: For heat exhaustion, it is recommended that the worker not return to work that day and that if symptoms worsen or do not improve within 60 minutes, the worker should be taken to a clinic or emergency room for medical evaluation.

10. If a worker is not alert or seems confused, this may be heat stroke. Call 911 immediately.

True: This is true on both counts. First, lack of alertness or confusion can be indicators of heat stroke. Second, if heat stroke is suspected, always call 911.

There's an app for that! You may download an Android and iPhone compatible app developed by OSHA, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.