Toolbox Talks – Seasonal Heat Stress

As spring turns into summer and brings up “hot weather,” we should all be aware of some tips to prevent heat stress. Remember, physical activity at high temperatures can directly affect health and indirectly be the cause of accidents.

What Is Heat Stress?
It’s a signal that says the body is having difficulty maintaining its narrow temperature range. The heart pumps faster, blood is diverted from internal organs to the skin, breathing rate increases, sweating increases, all in an attempt to transfer more heat to the outside air and cool the skin by evaporation of sweat. If the body can’t keep up, then the person suffers effects ranging from heat cramps to heat exhaustion, and finally, to heat stroke.

Dry Clothes and Skin Does Not Mean You Are Not Sweating!
In dry climates you might not feel wet or sticky, but you are still sweating. On a very warm day you can lose as much as two liters of fluid.

To protect yourself:
• Drink water frequently and moderately (every 15-30 minutes—about a glassful). Due to the fact that most of us already consume excessive salt in our diets, salt tables are NOT recommended for general use.
• Eat lightly.
• Do more strenuous jobs during the cooler morning hours.
• Use ventilation or fans in enclosed areas.
• Remember that it takes about 1-2 weeks for the body to adjust to the heat. This adaptation to heat is quickly lost, so your body will need time to readjust after a vacation.
• Avoid alcohol consumption. Many cases of heat stroke have occurred the day after a “night on the town.”
• Wear light colored, cotton clothes. And keep your shirt on. Desert nomads don’t wear all those clothes for nothing.

During long periods of unusual heat waves, management should adjust normal work hours whenever possible—such as starting earlier and quitting before the hottest part of the day.
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**Items Discussed:**

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**Problem Areas or Concerns:**

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**Attendees (Signatures):**

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**Comments:**

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