

## PROTECTING YOURSELF FROM HEAT ILLNESS



Heat stress from exertion or hot environments, places workers at risk for illnesses such as, heat exhaustion, heat cramps, or heat stroke

**Heat Exhaustion:** The body's response to an excessive loss of water and salt, usually through sweating.

### Symptoms:

- Rapid heart beat
- Heavy sweating
- Extreme weakness or fatigue
- Dizziness
- Nausea, vomiting
- Irritability
- Fast, shallow breathing
- Slightly elevated body temperature

### First Aid:

- Rest in a cool area
- Drink plenty of water or other cool beverages
- Take a cool shower or bath

**Heat Cramps:** Can affect workers who sweat a lot during strenuous activity. Sweating depletes the body's salt and moisture levels.

### Symptoms:

- Muscle cramps, pain or spasms in the abdomen, arms and/or legs
- (Cramps can occur later in the day or at night)

### First Aid:

- Stop all activity and sit in a cool place
- Drink clear juice or a sports beverage, or drink water with food. (Avoid salt tablets)
- Do not return to strenuous work for at least a few hours after the cramps have subsided. If serious cramps occur, you may need to rest the next day as well
- Seek medical attention if you have the following: heart problems, are on a low-sodium diet, or if the cramps do not subside within one hour

**Heat Stroke:** A condition that occurs when the body becomes unable to control its temperature and can cause death or permanent disability. **Medical Treatment is needed immediately!**

### Symptoms:

- High body temperature
- Confusion and/or agitation
- Loss of coordination
  
- Hot, dry skin or profuse sweating
- Throbbing headache
- Seizures, coma

### First Aid:

- Request immediate medical assistance – call 911
- Move the worker to a cool, shaded area
- Remove excess clothing and apply large amounts of cool water to their body

## PROTECT YOURSELF

Avoid heavy exertion, extreme heat, sun exposure and high humidity when possible. When these cannot be avoided, take the following preventive steps:

- Wear light-colored, loose-fitting clothing such as cotton.
- Gradually build up to heavy work; acclimation is very important.
- Drink cool water frequently. Drink enough water that you never become thirsty.
- Schedule heavy work during the coolest part of the day.