



COALITION FOR CONSTRUCTION(CCS) SAFETY MEMORANDUM

TO: ALL MEMBERS

FROM: GARY MARTIN, SAFETY DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: HEAT ILLNESS AND PREVENTION

DATE: JULY 1, 2019

Every year several workers die and thousands become ill working in extreme heat and/or humid conditions.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) law states, “employers are responsible for providing workplaces free of known safety hazards.” This includes protecting workers from extreme heat. An employer with workers exposed to high temperatures should establish a complete heat illness prevention program. OSHA’s safety message is as follows: **Water, Rest, and Shade.**

As a reminder the following are symptoms of heat illness:

Heat stroke, the most serious form of heat-related illness, happens when the body becomes unable to regulate its core temperature. Sweating stops and the body can no longer rid itself of excess heat. Signs include confusion, loss of consciousness, and seizures. **Heat stroke is a medical emergency that may result in death! Call 911 immediately.**

Heat exhaustion is the body's response to loss of water and salt from heavy sweating. Signs include headache, nausea, dizziness, weakness, irritability, thirst, and heavy sweating.

Heat cramps are caused by the loss of body salts and fluid during sweating. Low salt levels in muscles cause painful cramps. Tired muscles—those used for performing the work—are usually the ones most affected by cramps. Cramps may occur during or after working hours.

Heat rash, also known as prickly heat, is skin irritation caused by sweat that does not evaporate from the skin. Heat rash is the most common problem in hot work environments.

We often understand and recognize symptoms of heat illness but fail to know what to do when an emergency arises. The chart on the next page shows the symptoms and first aid measures to take if a worker shows signs of a heat-related illness.

Illness	Symptoms	First Aid*
Heat stroke	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Confusion ▪ Fainting ▪ Seizures ▪ Excessive sweating or red, hot, dry skin ▪ Very high body temperature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Call 911 <p>While waiting for help:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Place worker in shady, cool area ▪ Loosen clothing, remove outer clothing ▪ Fan air on worker; cold packs in armpits ▪ Wet worker with cool water; apply ice packs, cool compresses, or ice if available ▪ Provide fluids (preferably water) as soon as possible ▪ Stay with worker until help arrives
Heat exhaustion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cool, moist skin ▪ Heavy sweating ▪ Headache ▪ Nausea or vomiting ▪ Dizziness ▪ Light headedness ▪ Weakness ▪ Thirst ▪ Irritability ▪ Fast heartbeat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have worker sit or lie down in a cool, shady area ▪ Give worker plenty of water or other cool beverages to drink ▪ Cool worker with cold compresses/ice packs ▪ Take to clinic or emergency room for medical evaluation or treatment if signs or symptoms worsen or do not improve within 60 minutes. ▪ Do not return to work that day
Heat cramps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Muscle spasms ▪ Pain ▪ Usually in abdomen, arms, or legs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have worker rest in shady, cool area ▪ Worker should drink water or other cool beverages ▪ Wait a few hours before allowing worker to return to strenuous work ▪ Have worker seek medical attention if cramps don't go away
Heat rash	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clusters of red bumps on skin ▪ Often appears on neck, upper chest, folds of skin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Try to work in a cooler, less humid environment when possible ▪ Keep the affected area dry

* Remember, if you are not a medical professional, use this information as a guide only to help workers in need.

Source: [The Occupational Health and Safety Administration \(OSHA\)](#)

The link below is an additional reference in helping implement a Heat Illness Prevention Program:

<https://www.osha.gov/pls/publications/publication.athruz?pType=Industry&pID=571>

Be safe during the 4th of July holiday and the rest of the summer!