

# CBS Corporate Safety and Environmental Affairs

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July 2014

## Heat Stress

With summer here, we spend more time in the sun and working in the heat. Employees working outdoors or in extreme heat are more likely to develop heat-induced illnesses. Age and certain medical conditions may also increase your risk of overheating, so take precautions if you are over 65; overweight; have heart disease or high blood pressure; and/or take certain medications. Familiarize yourself with the different types of heat stress conditions and how to keep you and your co-workers safe this summer.

### Types of Heat Stress:

#### Heat Stroke

Heat stroke is the most serious heat-related condition. It occurs when the sweating mechanism in the body fails and body temperature rises rapidly with no way to cool down. Symptoms include hot, dry skin or profuse sweating; hallucinations; chills; throbbing headache; high body temperature; confusion; and slurred speech.

If an employee is suspected to be suffering from heat stroke, call 911 immediately and attempt to cool the individual's body.

#### Heat Exhaustion

Heat exhaustion is the result of excessive water and salt loss due to profuse sweating. Symptoms include heavy sweating; extreme weakness or fatigue; confusion; nausea; muscle cramps; slightly elevated body temperature; and irregular breathing.

If an employee is suspected to be suffering from heat exhaustion, allow him to rest in a cool, shaded area and have him drink water or sports drinks.

#### Heat Syncope

Heat syncope is sudden dizziness or fainting that occurs when an individual has been standing or suddenly rises after being in the heat too

### Tips to Prevent Heat Stress

- Wear light-colored, loose-fitting, breathable clothing, such as cotton.
- Avoid non-breathing, synthetic clothing.
- Gradually build up to heavy work.
- Schedule heavy work during the coolest parts of day.
- Take more breaks in extreme heat and humidity.
- Take breaks in the shade or a cool area when possible.
- Drink water frequently. Drink enough water that you never become thirsty; approximately 8 ounces every 15-20 minutes.
- Avoid alcohol and drinks with large amounts of caffeine or sugar.
- Be aware that protective clothing or personal protective equipment may increase the risk of heat stress.
- Monitor your physical condition and that of your co-workers.

long. Dehydration can cause heat syncope. Individuals experiencing dizziness due to heat should find a cool place to rest and rehydrate.

### Heat Cramps

Heat cramps occur when excessive sweating causes muscle cramping due to depleted water and salt levels in the body. Heat cramps may indicate the onset of heat exhaustion.

Individuals suffering from heat cramps should stop all activity; rest in a cool place; and rehydrate. Strenuous work should not be continued for several hours after cramping. Medical attention should be given immediately if the employee has heart problems; is on a low sodium diet; and/or the cramps do not subside within an hour.

### Heat Rash

Heat rash is skin irritation as a result of excessive sweating. It generally occurs on the neck and upper chest; in the groin; under the breast; and in elbow creases. Keeping the affected area dry by using a dusting powder to absorb moisture helps to prevent heat rash from developing, as well as working in cooler, less humid environments when possible.

The CBS SkillSoft training program offers a course on Heat Stress Recognition and Prevention. Please contact [Dorothy.Pastelak@cbs.com](mailto:Dorothy.Pastelak@cbs.com) for additional information.