



OHIO PHCC Toolbox Talk

Weekly Safety Meeting

Here Comes the Sun



Working an 8- or 10- hour work day in the blazing sun, without even a few minutes in a cool spot, can lead to heat exhaustion. You sweat profusely, your face turns beet red, and you sometimes suffer mild nausea.

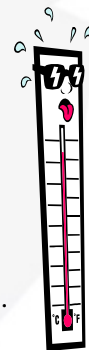
Sometimes heat exhaustion leads to an even more dangerous type of hazard: heatstroke. You're no longer sweating. Instead of red, your face starts turning white or gray. Your respiration speeds up, and you experience extreme dizziness. Medical experts call this a form of shock. If this rapidly developing heatstroke is not abated, the shock can lead to unconsciousness, and eventually death.

In most confined spaces (manholes, pits, shafts, tunnels, etc.), little oxygen is exchanged, and toxic or combustible atmospheres can speed up the heat exhaustion/heatstroke syndrome. If you're working in a confined space, be sure the area is vented so that the bad air is pumped out and good air is pumped in.

Don't be a hero. Get out of the sun and seek some shade where you can lower your body temperature. Treat yourself to as much cool water as you can drink to offset the profuse sweating that accompanies physical exertion (operating a jackhammer, sawing, drilling, crawling through narrow passages,

Heat exhaustion and heatstroke are potentially life-threatening. If you or a co-worker are showing the symptoms listed above, someone should call 9-1-1 immediately.

Workers who wear tank tops or no tops at all risk major sunburn, pain, blisters, and tissue damage. Sunburn is part of working out in the open all day? Yes, but everything has its limits. Sunburn often leads to sun poisoning and, in some cases, requires long-term recuperation.



Modern medical science has shown that excessive exposure to the sun can cause skin cancer. Construction workers can inadvertently expose themselves to excessive sun through failure to wear proper protective clothing while on the jobsite.

So cover up. Having a nice tan is one thing, having cancer is quite another. You must wear protective clothing to prevent excessive and painful sunburn.

Summer Heat Mini-Quiz

1. Which of the following statements is true?
 - a. People who tan easily or have darker skin aren't affected by the summer heat.
 - b. A sunscreen with a high sun-protection factor (SPF) eliminates the risk of heat related illnesses.
 - c. If you're in good shape, you can handle the heat.
 - d. None of the above.

Answer: d. Though dark skin makes you less prone to sunburns, it doesn't protect you from high temperatures. Sunscreens don't eliminate the risk of heat-related illnesses. And being in good shape doesn't prevent your body from getting too hot and losing fluids.

2. Heat is a life-threatening condition. True or False

Answer: True. People with heatstroke have a high body temperature, and their body goes into shock. Left untreated, people die. When your body loses that much water, it can't regulate temperature and overheats.

This is a repeat message: Don't be a hero. Get out of the sun and seek some shade where you can lower your body temperature. Drink tons of water. Be kind of yourself. You deserve it. Be cool!

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