



# SAFETY ALERT

## Heat Exhaustion

### **Description of Incident (not an IWS incident):**

Two men overheated from excessive heat during their first week on the job as new construction laborers. Their body core temperatures were 110 degrees when they arrived at the emergency room. "Their internal organs were fried" said the mother of one of the men. Neither of the men survived their injuries- [Read the full story](#).

### **Introduction:**

When working during hot weather, we may suffer heat exhaustion or sunstroke. Heat exhaustion is caused by the loss of body salt, and sunstroke occurs when the body mechanism is not able to keep the system cool. The following are the symptoms of these ailments and the steps we should take to aid the victim.

### **Symptoms:**

The first signs of heat exhaustion are dizziness, fast heartbeat, weakness, headache, blurred vision, nausea and staggering. The face becomes pale, there is profuse sweating, the pulse is weak, and breathing is shallow. The person may become unconscious.

### **How to Avoid:**

Keep in good physical condition and stop to rest when you begin to feel faint. Increase dietary salt and fluids when working in extremely hot weather.

### **Sunstroke or Heatstroke Symptoms:**

The victim develops a severe headache, the face is red the skin is hot and dry, there is no sweating, and the pulse is strong and very rapid. The person has a high fever (103-106F.) and may become unconscious. This is followed by convulsions, coma, and sometimes death.

### **Treatment:**

Get the victim to where there's professional medical treatment as soon as possible. In the meantime, place the individual in the shade. Loosen the clothing and cool the victim with the best means available. If the individual's temperature starts to drop, cover with a light blanket, so that the sudden change in body temperature won't cause shivering or convulsions. Provide water and Gatorade or electrolyte solution to the victim in small sips at frequent intervals.

### **How to Avoid:**

Stay away from alcoholic beverages. Instead, drink water, lemonade, or citrus fruit juices. Wear clothing that is lightweight, well ventilated, and loose. Replace the body salts lost through perspiration by making sure your salt and fluid intake is adequate.

### **Know The Difference:**

Become familiar with the symptoms of sun- stroke and heat exhaustion. As we've discussed, the treatment for each of these ailments is different and knowing the difference could mean life or death.

# HEAT-RELATED ILLNESSES

## WHAT TO LOOK FOR

## WHAT TO DO

### HEAT STROKE

- High body temperature (103°F or higher)
- Hot, red, dry, or damp skin
- Fast, strong pulse
- Headache
- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Confusion
- Losing consciousness (passing out)

- Call 911 right away-heat stroke is a medical emergency
- Move the person to a cooler place
- Help lower the person's temperature with cool cloths or a cool bath
- Do not give the person anything to drink

### HEAT EXHAUSTION

- Heavy sweating
- Cold, pale, and clammy skin
- Fast, weak pulse
- Nausea or vomiting
- Muscle cramps
- Tiredness or weakness
- Dizziness
- Headache
- Fainting (passing out)

- Move to a cool place
- Loosen your clothes
- Put cool, wet cloths on your body or take a cool bath
- Sip water

#### Get medical help right away if:

- You are throwing up
- Your symptoms get worse
- Your symptoms last longer than 1 hour

### HEAT CRAMPS

- Heavy sweating during intense exercise
- Muscle pain or spasms

- Stop physical activity and move to a cool place
- Drink water or a sports drink
- Wait for cramps to go away before you do any more physical activity

#### Get medical help right away if:

- Cramps last longer than 1 hour
- You're on a low-sodium diet
- You have heart problems

### SUNBURN

- Painful, red, and warm skin
- Blisters on the skin

- Stay out of the sun until your sunburn heals
- Put cool cloths on sunburned areas or take a cool bath
- Put moisturizing lotion on sunburned areas
- Do not break blisters

### HEAT RASH

- Red clusters of small blisters that look like pimples on the skin (usually on the neck, chest, groin, or in elbow creases)

- Stay in a cool, dry place
- Keep the rash dry
- Use powder (like baby powder) to soothe the rash

