



Preventing Heat Related Illness

Municipal employees working outdoors are susceptible to heat and sun related illness each day they work. During hot weather and especially during high humidity your body sometimes cannot adequately cool itself. If your body temperature rises too high you can develop a heat-related illness. Age, health, hydration and physical condition can also be contributing factors. Guidelines to prevent heat-related illnesses:

- Dress for the heat:** Wear lightweight, light-colored clothing. Light colors reflect away some of the sun’s energy. It is also a good idea to wear a hat.
- Slow down:** Avoid strenuous activity. If you must, do it during the coolest part of the day, which is usually from 4:00 am to 7:00 am.
- Drink water:** Carry water with you and drink continuously even if you aren’t thirsty. Avoid drinking excessive caffeine and alcohol during warm weather.
- Stay indoors:** If you go outdoors, be sure to use sunscreen (Minimum SPF 30)
- Eat small meals and more often:** Avoid foods that are high in protein which increase metabolic heat.
- Take regular breaks:** If you recognize that you, or someone else, are showing the signs of a heat-related illness, stop activity and find a cool place.

General Care for Heat-Related Illness:

- Cool the body
- Keep body hydrated
- Minimize shock

Heat-related illness usually comes in stages. The first stage is heat cramps in muscles. If you or a coworker are experiencing heat cramps, stop activity and rest. Drink small amounts of cool water. Gently stretch the cramped muscles and hold the stretch for about 20 seconds. Repeat if necessary.

More serious stages include:

- Cool, moist, pale skin (possibly red)
- Headache
- Dizziness and weakness or exhaustion
- Nausea
- Skin may or may not feel hot

Last stages include:

- Vomiting
- Decreased alertness level
- High body temperature
- Skin may still be moist or red, hot and dry
- Rapid, weak pulse and shallow breathing

The last stage of a heat-related illness is life threatening.
Call 911 immediately.

For Heat Cramps or Heat Exhaustion:

Get the person to a cooler place and have him or her rest in a comfortable position. If the person is fully awake and alert, give a half glass of cool water every 15 minutes. Do not let him or her drink too quickly. Remove or loosen tight clothing and apply cool, wet cloths such as towels or wet sheets. **Call 911** if the person refuses water, vomits or losses consciousness.

For Heat Stroke:

Heat stroke is a life-threatening situation! **Call 911**. Move the person to a cooler place. Quickly cool the body. Wrap wet sheets around the body and fan it. If you have ice packs or cold packs, wrap them in a cloth and place them on each of the victim's wrists and ankles, in the armpits and on the neck to cool the large blood vessels. (Do not use rubbing alcohol because it closes the skin's pores and prevents heat loss.) Watch for signals of breathing problems and make sure the airway is clear. Keep the person lying down. Identifying individuals suffering heat-related illness is critical. During the summer months, ensure that employees are aware of the symptoms and treatment measures.

Preventing Heat Related Illness Sign In Sheet



Municipality

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