

Propel HR NEWSLETTER

SAFETY

JUNE 2001

THE DANGERS OF HEAT

Overexposure to high temperatures and humidity can quickly lead to heat exhaustion. It is imperative that employees are able to recognize the early signs and symptoms of overexposure. Early recognition can ward off serious consequences. Generally heat exhaustion is caused by loss of body fluids and important salts. If untreated, heat exhaustion can lead to heat stroke.

Heat Exhaustion

Heat exhaustion typically occurs when people work or exercise in a warm humid place where body fluids are lost through heavy sweating. Fluid loss causes blood flow to decrease in the vital organs, resulting in a form of shock.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Cool, moist skin
- Skin is either pale or red
- Heavy sweating
- Dilated pupils
- Headache
- Nausea
- Dizziness
- Weakness, feeling of exhaustion
- Body temperature normal or below normal

FIRST AID TREATMENT

- ✓ Check the victim for consciousness and what happened
- ✓ Get the employee out of the heat (in a shady place or AC room)
- ✓ Place wet sheets around the employee and fan
- ✓ Give employee a small cup of water about every 15 minutes
- ✓ Care for shock

Heat Strokes

Heat strokes are life threatening. The victim's temperature control system stops producing sweat to cool the body. The body temperature can rise so high that brain damage and death may result if the body is not cooled quickly. Heat stroke requires medical attention.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Hot, dry skin
- Skin is red
- Very high body temperature
- Progressive loss of consciousness
- Fast, weak pulse
- Fast, shallow breathing

FIRST AID TREATMENT

- ✓ Check the scene to see it is safe
- ✓ Check the victim for consciousness and what happened
- ✓ Get the person out of the heat
- ✓ Cool the victim fast
- ✓ Cover the employee with cool cloths and fans
- ✓ Call EMS if necessary

SAFETY TIPS

- Drink fluids frequently
- Drink at least 8 cups of fluid (water) a day
- Make fluids easily accessible to all employees
- Don't just drink when you are thirsty
- Avoid caffeine

Propel HR will gladly assist you with any questions you may have concerning the dangers of heat. Please feel free to call Propel HR at (864) 271-7611 or (800) 446-6567.