

TAILGATE TOPIC



TOPIC: Heat Illness Prevention

OVERVIEW: Deaths and severe injuries occur every year in all sectors of the agricultural industries due to heat illness. Once heat illness sets in, death can occur quickly. So, it is important to know how to protect yourself from heat illness and how to recognize its early warning signs.

TALKING POINTS:

- **Heat illness results when the body is unable to cool itself and the core body temperature rises to unsafe levels.**
- **It is important to note that heat illness can occur at any temperature.**
- **The contributing factors that can increase a person’s risk of heat illness are:** poor physical condition, increased activity level, dehydration, heavy clothing or many layers of clothing being worn, exposure to radiant or conductive heat, high air temperature, and high humidity level.
- **Symptoms of heat illness can include some or all of the following:** Dizziness, decreased alertness, loss of coordination, sudden weakness, fatigue, nausea, headache, pale or flushed complexion, rash, muscle or abdominal cramps, loss of consciousness, clammy/moist or hot and dry skin, mental confusion, delirium, and or convulsions.

Here are some tips to reduce your risk of heat illness.

1. **Acclimatization:** allow your body to adjust to warmer environments by limiting your exposure for the first few days and gradually increasing the work periods.
2. **Drink water at frequent intervals.** At least one quart per hour is recommended.
3. **Avoid energy drinks, caffeine, sodas, and alcohol.** They will dehydrate you and increase your risk of heat illness.
4. **Rest in the shade** on breaks. Do not crawl under vehicles or sit inside vehicles that are not air conditioned.
5. **Be aware of how you are feeling.** Let your supervisor know immediately if you have any symptoms of heat illness.
6. **Look out for your co-workers** and alert the supervisor if any of them seem to have symptoms of heat stress.

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

1. What factors can increase your risk of developing heat illness? (Answer: see list in bullet #3)
2. Name 5 symptoms of heat illness. (Answer: see list in bullet #4)
3. Does the temperature have to be high for heat illness to occur? (Answer: No)
4. How can you reduce your risk of heat illness? (Answer: see tips in #1-6 above)

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