Toolbox talk

Heat illness

Water, getting used to the heat, and the signs of heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

Heat illness can take down a strong, experienced worker on an ordinary day, and anyone who isn't used to the heat yet is at higher risk. This talk covers drinking water, easing into the heat, and spotting heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

Key point **Confusion in the heat is heat stroke until proven otherwise. Call 911 and start cooling.**

What happened

In Chicago in 2012, a 36-year-old worker was installing electrical conduit in an uncovered trench on his first day on the job. He developed heat stroke and died. OSHA citation release, Dec. 2012

Drink before you're thirsty

For moderate work in the heat, drink about 1 cup (8 ounces) of water every 15 to 20 minutes. On long, sweaty days, add sports drinks with electrolytes. Skip alcohol and drinks with a lot of caffeine or sugar.

Know where the cool water and the shade are before the day starts.

Ease into the heat

Your body takes 7 to 14 days to get used to working in the heat. A new worker starts at no more than 20% of a normal day in the heat and adds no more than 20% a day. If you've worked in the heat before, start at no more than half a day.

Heat exhaustion

Watch yourself and the person next to you for headache, nausea, dizziness, weakness, irritability, thirst and heavy sweating.

Get them out of the heat, have them sip cool water, take off extra layers, and cool their head, face and neck with cold water. Get them checked by a clinic, and have someone stay with them.

Heat stroke

Confusion, slurred speech, passing out, seizures, and hot dry skin or heavy sweating mean heat stroke. It can kill. Call 911 and stay with them.

Move them to shade and cool them fast. Soak their clothes with cool water, put cold wet cloths or ice on the head, neck, armpits and groin, and fan them.

Ask the crew

1. Where are the water and the shade on this job today?
2. Who on the crew is new to working in the heat this week?
3. Who are you watching today, and who is watching you?

Crew sign-in

Heat illness

Date _____ Site or project _____

Presented by _____ Company _____

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Signing means you attended this talk and had the chance to ask questions.