



# HEAT ILLNESS AWARENESS



From 1999 to 2010, a total of 7,415 deaths in the United States, an average of 618 per year, were associated with exposure to excessive natural heat. In addition to fatalities caused by heat illness, numerous reports and citations are received each year for occupational illness caused by working in high heat conditions. By taking several simple precautions, employees can control and/or reduce exposure to conditions that may cause heat illness.

- Heat Illness Disorders and Symptoms (in order of progressing severity)
- Heat Rash – Skin rash which commonly occurs under hot and humid conditions where sweat does not evaporate readily. Characterized by irritated/itchy skin with prickly feeling and small red bumps on skin.
- Heat Cramps – Muscle cramping due to loss of salt through sweating. Can be the first sign of more serious heat illness. Characterized by muscle spasms in arms, legs, and abdomen during or following work activities.
- Heat Syncope – Fainting caused by heat exposure and blood pooling in lower portions of the body.
- Heat Exhaustion – Profuse sweating which results in dehydration. Characterized by: fatigue, dizziness, and nausea; pale and moist skin; and possibly slightly elevated temperature. Can progress quickly to heat stroke, if ignored.
- Heat Stroke – Sweating stops and the body fails to regulate its temperature. Victims may die if they don't receive immediate medical treatment. Characterized by: mental confusion, fainting, or seizures; hot dry skin usually reddish in color; and high body temperature.

## Treatments for Heat Illness Disorders

- Heat Rash – Wash and dry skin. Wear loose clothing and keep skin dry.
- Heat Syncope, Heat Cramps, or Heat Exhaustion – MONITOR SYMPTOMS AND PROVIDE FIRST AID – Rest in shaded and cool place and drink non-caffeinated fluids. Monitor for improvement of symptoms and seek emergency care if symptoms worsen. Do not return to work in heat until symptoms are relieved.
- Heat Stroke – FOLLOW ESTABLISHED EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN – Call 911 immediately, soak victim's clothing with cool water, move victim to shaded and cool area, fan victim to increase cooling of their body.

