



# Toolbox Talks

## Spotlight on Safety



## Heat Exhaustion And Heatstroke

Working in the blazing sun or during hot weather without taking a break in a cool spot can lead to heat exhaustion or sunstroke. Over exposure to high temperatures and humidity can quickly lead to heat exhaustion. Heat exhaustion is caused by the loss of body fluids and, in some cases, salt depletion. Heat exhaustion can lead to heatstroke, which is a medical emergency because the body is not able to keep itself cool.

### Heat Exhaustion

**Symptoms:** The first signs of heat exhaustion are headache, thirst, nausea, dizziness, lightheadness, profuse sweating, and pale and cool skin. The person is usually conscious but could faint.

**Treatment:** When a person shows symptoms of heat exhaustion, he/she should be taken to a cool shady area or into an air-conditioned room or vehicle. Have the person lie down and rest. The victim should drink plenty of water or sports beverages. If the heat exhaustion persists, the victim should be taken to the hospital emergency room.

### Heatstroke (Sunstroke)

**Symptoms:** Many of the same symptoms occur as for heat exhaustion. However, sweating will stop, the skin will be hot and dry, and the face turns red. The individual will experience a severe headache, walking difficulty, disorientation, and sometimes unconsciousness.

**Treatment:** This is an emergency situation that requires immediate action. Get the victim medical attention as soon as possible. In the meantime, move the victim to a cool place, and in addition to the treatment listed above for heat exhaustion, apply cool, wet towels.

Preventing Heat Exhaustion/Heatstroke:

- ▲ Don't eat a lot of high-fat or high-protein foods before going out into the heat. Eat something light and easy to digest.
- ▲ Drink plenty of water. Sports drinks are also good because they help replace the minerals you lose when you sweat and the diluted fruit juice in the drink conveys some vitamin C to protect cells and muscles from damage. Avoid alcoholic beverages, caffeinated drinks, and soft drinks.
- ▲ Wear loose and light clothing. Your hard hat will also help shade your head from the sun.
- ▲ Protect your skin from the sun with sunblock because sunburn slows down the body's ability to dissipate heat.

***Heat exhaustion is not fatal, but heatstroke can be. Stay cool, drink plenty of water, and take a break if you are not feeling well.***