



Toolbox Talks

Spotlight on Safety



Keep Your Cool When The Weather Is Hot

Then the temperature starts to rise, plan to stay cool. In the past 10 years, more people have died in the United States from heat-related illnesses than from hurricanes, tornadoes, lightning and fires combined.

Here are some tips for staying cool when the temperatures soar:

- ▲ Drink lots of fluids before and during work. When you feel thirsty, that is a signal from your body that it is starting to dehydrate and needs water. A good rule of thumb is to drink at least eight, 8-oz. glasses (2 quarts or 2 liters) of water a day.
- ▲ Drink sports drinks if that is what it takes to get you to drink fluids, but remember that sports drinks often have high sodium levels, which in large quantities is not good for you if you have high blood pressure. Flavored water is also available.
- ▲ Avoid caffeinated beverages and alcohol because both have substances that will cause dehydration. Stay away from soda too, because the carbonation may cause a feeling of fullness and prevent you from consuming enough fluids.
- ▲ Wear light-colored clothing because dark clothing will absorb the heat.
- ▲ Wear loose-fitting clothing made of cotton or other materials that will let air circulate to cool your skin.
- ▲ Eat light, healthy, low-fat meals.
- ▲ Stay in shape because body fat acts as insulation and can slow the body's ability to remove heat, and your heart will have to work harder if you are carrying around those extra pounds.
- ▲ Take enough rest breaks in shaded or cool areas to let your body cool down.
- ▲ Don't take salt tablets because it is possible to ingest too much salt from tablets. Although your body does need sodium in hot weather, your general food consumption will provide most if not all of what you need. If you experience symptoms such as nausea and muscle cramps, consult your physician to see if you need to supplement your sodium intake.
- ▲ Get out of the heat if your stomach is upset or if you feel dizzy or faint.
- ▲ Wear your hard hat to shade and protect your head. It will give you the same protection as a baseball cap, and the way the suspension inside the hard hat is set up it will actually allow air to circulate while protecting your head from a rock falling out of the excavator bucket.
- ▲ Wear sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or more to protect you from sunburn.

Prevention, knowledge and lots of water are the keys to staying cool!