**Heat Stress for Outdoor Workers (Safety talk for an expected high Humidex day)**

**Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Attendance: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Dangers of Heat Stress**

When your body’s cooling system can’t keep up with the heat, the body dehydrates and body temperature rises above 38°C. That’s when heat illnesses can occur. Heat illness has a range of increasingly serious symptoms, beginning with heat rash and muscle cramps, which are warning signs of the onset of more severe heat stress. If no action is taken, symptoms will worsen and the health effects will progress to more severe stages of heat illness that are life threatening, such as heat exhaustion or heat stroke.

It is often difficult for someone with heat stress to realize the danger they are in. Therefore, it is extremely important that we all watch out for heat stress symptoms in each other, and take action as necessary.

The following heat illnesses are in order of the stages of progression of heat stress:

**Heat Rash**

Red bumpy rash with severe itching.

First Aid: Change into dry clothes, rinse skin with cool water.

**Heat cramps**

Muscle cramping due to overheating of the body and dehydration.

First Aid: Move to a cool area. Loosen clothing. Gently massage and stretch cramping muscles. Drink cool, lightly salted water or an electrolyte replacement drink. Salt tablets are not recommended. Seek medical attention if cramping doesn’t go away.

**Fainting**

Sudden fainting during work, cool moist skin, weak pulse.

First aid: Assess need for CPR. Move to cool area. Loosen clothing. Have the person lie down. Offer sips of cool water.

**Heat Exhaustion**

Heat exhaustion is when our body’s cooling system starts to break down due to fluid loss and inadequate salt and water intake. Symptoms include heavy sweating, cool moist skin, elevated body temperature, weak pulse, tired and weak, nausea and vomiting very thirsty, panting or rapid breathing, and blurry vision.

First Aid:Get medical aid and cool the person down (move to a shaded area, loosen clothing, drink cool water). Fan and spray with water. Don’t leave the person alone. It takes time to cool the body down from heat exhaustion, and if it’s not treated promptly, it can lead to heat stroke.

**Heat Stroke**

A condition that occurs when the body becomes unable to control its temperature, and can lead to death or permanent disability. Heat stroke is a medical emergency. Your body has used up all its water and salt and cannot cool itself. Your body temperature rises to dangerous levels.

Symptoms are high body temperature—40°C or more, plus any of the following: weak and confused, irrational behaviour, hot dry red skin or profuse sweating, fast pulse, headache or dizziness. In later stages the person may pass out or have convulsions.

First Aid: Request immediate emergency medical assistance. Take aggressive steps to cool the worker down. Move the worker to a cool, shaded area. Remove excess clothing and fan and spray the person with cool water. Offer sips of water if the person is able to drink.

**How can we protect ourselves?**

Prevent heat stress with six simple steps:

1. Know the signs and symptoms of heat stress

2. Watch out for symptoms in yourself and others

3. Wear sunscreen, a hat, and lightweight, loose-fitting clothing

4. Drink water often – avoid drinks with alcohol and caffeine

5. Take breaks in the shade and more often on hot days

6. Know how your workplace deals with heat stress

**Additional attendance and comments:**

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Visit sunsafetyatwork.ca for more information.

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