



MAFES Dawg Tracks

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Prevent Heat Stress



Here comes summer and here comes the sun. Both are great, but they both carry dangerous risks with the heat. Working in the agriculture industry the majority of our time is spent outdoors. In the spring, there is planting, spraying and fertilizing - continuing into the summer with more spraying, fertilizing, and scouting for diseases and pests. Then, here comes the fall-harvest time again. As the sun is the lifeblood of our crops, it can be a holy terror as we work out in all the time.

I believe that a “reminder” every year may help to save some possible victims of heat stress, heat exhaustion or worse still a heat stroke.

Heat stress and heat illness are serious matters:

- ✓ Heat stress is a buildup of body heat generated either internally by muscle use or externally by our environment.
- ✓ Heat exhaustion and heat stroke results when the body temperature is overwhelmed by heat. As the heat increases, body temperature and the heart rate rise painlessly
- ✓ The most serious heat related illness is heat stroke. The symptoms are confusion, irrational behavior, convulsions, coma, and death. While over 20 percent of heat stroke victims die regardless of age, children seem to be more susceptible to heat strain than adults. In some cases, the side effects of heat stroke are heat sensitivity and varying degrees of brain and kidney damage.

HIGH TEMPERATURE + HIGH HUMIDITY + PHYSICAL ACTIVITY = HEAT ILLNESS:

Following are some examples of heat illnesses, their symptoms, descriptions, and precautions to take:

HEAT CRAMPS-

Description-Painful muscle spasms caused by loss of salt through excessive sweating.

Symptoms-Muscle and excessive sweating.

What to do-

- Get the victim to a cool place.
- Give the victim cool drinks sprinkled with salt and salty foods, but no salt tablets.
- Remove tight or wet clothing that may restrict the blood flow.
- If cramps continue, seek medical help.

HEAT STROKE-

Description-A condition in which the body’s temperature rises above 106° F. (41° C.) and if not treated immediately may result in a coma, brain damage or death.

Symptoms

- Hot, dry, flushed skin, usually with no sweating.
- Agitation and confusion
- Headaches, nausea, and vomiting
- Irregular pulse
- Rapid, shallow breathing

- Possible seizure and loss of consciousness
- Possible shock and cardiac arrest

What to do –

- Heat stroke is a medical emergency! Get medical help immediately!
- Check victim’s airway, breathing and circulation. Give CPR, if needed. **If you don’t have it-GET CERTIFIED IN CPR!!**
- Cool victim with sponge or spray, covering with cold water, wet cloths, placing ice packs under their armpits and groin, and fan them as well.
- Move the victim to a cool place.
- Loosen or remove outer clothing.
- If victim is conscious, provide cool drinks with salt sprinkled in and salty foods, but no salt tablets.

HEAT EXHAUSTION-

Description – A more advanced and serious stage of heat stress.

Symptoms –

- General fatigue, weakness, and poor muscle control
- Dizziness and fainting
- Headaches and nausea
- Pale, cool, clammy skin
- Heavy sweating
- Cramps
- Rapid pulse, shallow breathing

What to do-

- Heat exhaustion is life threatening. Get medical help immediately.
- Check victim’s airway, breathing and circulation. Give CPR, if needed. If you don’t have it, **GET CERTIFIED IN CPR!**
- Cool victim with a sponge or spray, covering with cold, wet cloths, placing ice packs under the armpits and groin, and fanning.
- Move victim to a cool area.
- Loosen the outer layer of clothing.
- If victim is conscious, provide cool drinks with salt sprinkled in and salty foods but no salt tablets.

PROTECT YOURSELF-

- ✓ Learn to recognize the symptoms of heat stress and how to treat them.
- ✓ On hot days, don’t spare the water, drink often during the day.
- ✓ Wear loose clothes made of cotton and other fabrics that allow the air to pass through.
- ✓ Gauge your work habits and take sufficient breaks.

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