

MAFES Dawg Tracks

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MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
MS AGRICULTURAL AND
FORESTRY EXPERIMENT STATION

Whew, It's Hot!

Extreme heat often results in the highest number of annual deaths among all weather-related hazards. In most of the United States, extreme heat is defined as a long period (2 to 3 days) of high heat and humidity with temperatures above 90 degrees ... this is most every summer day here in Mississippi! In extreme heat, evaporation is slowed and the body must work extra hard to maintain a normal temperature. Older adults, children, sick or overweight individuals, and those who experienced heat exhaustion or strokes in the past are at greater risk from extreme heat.

- ✓ Reduce, eliminate or reschedule strenuous activities for the cooler time of the day.
- ✓ Wear lightweight, loose fitting, light-colored clothing to reflect heat and sunlight.
- ✓ Eat light - Cool, easy-to-digest foods such as fruit or salads. If you pack food, put it in a cooler or carry an ice pack.
- ✓ Stay hydrated - Drink plenty of water, non-alcoholic and decaffeinated fluids, even if you don't feel thirsty; a little every 15 minutes when sweating a lot. Always keep a cooler with variety of drinks or at least an ice water jug close by.
- ✓ Rest and cool down in the shade during breaks. Use air conditioners or spend time in air-conditioned locations when you can.
- ✓ Use portable fans inside non-air-conditioned areas to exhaust hot air or draw in cooler air. Do not direct the flow of fans toward yourself when room temperature is hotter than 90°F. The dry blowing air will dehydrate you faster.

Train Your Body to Handle Heat

Is somebody new to the job or has a worker been on vacation for several days, now back to work in the heat?

Your body needs time to acclimate to higher temps and other environmental changes. It usually takes 10 to 14 days of heat exposure with the work you are performing to reduce the risk for heat injury and become acclimated. Gradually increase workload and allow more frequent breaks for new workers or workers who have been away.

To prevent heat-related illness and death watch for...

- Heat cramps - muscle pains or spasms in the stomach, arms, or legs.
 - Heat exhaustion – heavy sweating, paleness, muscle cramps, tiredness, weakness, dizziness, headache, nausea or vomiting, or fainting.
- Action for either - Go to a cooler location and lie down. Loosen or remove clothing. Take sips of cool sports drinks with salt and sugar. Get medical help if symptoms get worse or last more than an hour.
- Heat stroke - extremely high body temperature (above 103 degrees); red, hot, and dry skin with no sweat; rapid, strong pulse; dizziness; confusion; or unconsciousness

Action - Call 911 or get the person to a hospital immediately. Cool down with whatever methods are available until medical help arrives.

For more info contact – Leslie Woolington
MAFES /MSU-EXTENSION
Risk Mgmt. / Loss Control
(662) 325-3204

Sources:

- <https://www.weather.gov/safety/heat-during>
- <https://www.ready.gov/heat>
- <https://www.shape.com/fitness/cardio/10-must-know-tips-exercising-hot-weather>