



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™  
MS AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY  
EXPERIMENT STATION

# MAFES DAWG TRACKS

We talk a lot about heat exhaustion and hydration—and we should. But here's the part we don't always say out loud ...

When it's 95°F+ and you're drenched in sweat, sleep-deprived, and on your 10th straight hour under the sun - for multiple days in a row ...

**People don't just overheat physically - they overheat emotionally!**

Snapping at a coworker. Miscommunicating on a phone/radio. Slamming tools around.

These aren't just "attitude problems." They're symptoms of stress, fatigue, dehydration, and a nervous system in overdrive.

Emotional regulation is a safety skill.

- Heat reduces patience.
- Fatigue kills empathy.
- Stress shuts down clear thinking.

That's a recipe for conflict, mistakes, injuries, and even workplace violence that would make a mosh pit look like a "safe space."

**We don't just need water breaks—we need emotional cool-downs too.**

Leadership on Hot Days Looks Like This:

✓ Empathy Over Ego

Ask, "What's going on brother/sister?" not "What's your freaking problem?"

✓ Listen With Purpose

Let them vent without fixing. Most people don't want advice, told how to do their job, or "tough loved" into compliance—they want to be heard.

✓ Model Calm

Your calm can regulate the group. People will reflect what they see. Scowl or talk crap, and they will magnify your posture by 1000. Be the thermostat - come in calm, curious, and collected, not the thermometer trying to force adjust the atmosphere.

✓ Speak Clearly, Not Loudly

Tension multiplies when communication breaks down. Say it slower, not sharper.

Heat + Emotion First Aid Combo Pack:

Hydration:

- Cold water, NOT ice-cold energy drinks.
- Add electrolytes if sweating heavily, and you see the salt patches on clothes.
- Offer—don't just demand—they drink.
- Remember mirroring; your stopping to sip and chat, lets them know you are present and applying "self-care," as well.

Cooling:

- Cool towels to the neck, armpits, and wrists.
- Get to shade—even briefly.
- Use humor if it helps others relax too.

Emotional Reset:

- "Let's take 5." is powerful statement.
- Pair a drink with a check-in: "You good?"
- Never shame someone for losing their cool—help them get it back.

**Water fixes dehydration.  
But empathy prevents explosions.**

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**Source:**

Allen Woffard, host of "Diary of a Bald Man" podcast & soon to be released on Kindle "The Blind Side of Safety".