



## ***Public Sector Safety Talks—APERMA***

### **“Beating the Heat”**

*It's that time of year again. It's hot outside, and it's just going to get worse. During this time of the year, it seems as though we are doing more work outside than we do any other time of the year, and according to the National Safety Council, in 2016, 472 people died in the U.S. from exposure to excessive heat. To keep ourselves from becoming another statistic, it's important that we know and keep in mind the risks involved while working outside in the heat.*



As we all know, the main hazard when it comes to working in the hot summer heat is **heat stress** (which occurs when your body can not cool off fast enough). But what we probably don't know is that there are different types of heat stress, different causes for each type, and different ways to treat each type.

So let's talk about the six different levels of heat stress:

1. **Heat Rash**— The mildest form of heat stress. It appears as red bumps where tight clothing traps sweat.
2. **Heat Fatigue**— This occurs usually because you are not accustomed (acclimation) to working out in extreme temperatures. You will generally feel tired as a symptom.
3. **Heat Collapse**— This is caused by the reduction of oxygen that is needed to get to the brain due to blood pooling in the extremities. Fainting is a primary symptom with heat collapse.
4. **Heat Cramps**— Heat cramps start to occur because of an imbalance of sodium (salt) in your body. You will feel these cramps either in your arms, legs, or stomach.
5. **Heat Exhaustion**— This is a more severe form of heat stress. Blood vessels will begin to collapse from the lack of fluids your body is not receiving. It's important to keep yourself hydrated because you may think the exhaustion you are feeling is heat collapse, yet it could be a lot worse.
6. **Heat Stroke**— This is the deadliest form of heat stress. It is caused when your body has used up all water and can no longer hydrate itself.



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When you are experiencing **heat stroke**, the following symptoms will occur:

- Absence of sweating
- Headache or dizziness
- Excessive hot, dry skin
- Rapid Pulse
- Difficulty breathing
- Confusion and weakness
- Nausea and vomiting



How do we keep heat stress from occurring? There are several steps we can take to prevent this from happening:

- Build up slowly to the heat so your body can adjust to working in extreme temperatures.
- **DRINK PLENTY OF FLUIDS!!!!!!** Keeping yourself hydrated is one of the best ways to avoid heat stress.
- Exercise and eat light, cool meals.
- Avoid drinking caffeine and alcohol when you will be working outside.
- Wear loose fit clothing made of breathable material such as cotton.
- Wear sunglasses, hats, and sun block when needed.
- Take breaks in shaded areas when needed.
- Utilize cooling equipment.



***It's important to know these differences when getting ready to work out in the sun. If you or a co-worker were to experience any of these levels of heat stress, knowing the symptoms and how to treat them could possibly save a life. Keep yourself hydrated and build yourself up to work in these conditions. Most importantly, if you are ever in doubt or need assistance, contact your supervisor.***

**Please feel free to contact Phil Hinton at 601-956-5810 with any questions regarding the above material.**

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