Plastics Pipe Institute
The Voice of an Industry.

SAFETY BULLETIN – JUNE 2023

The theme this month is **Heat Stress**

Heat stress is the condition affecting individuals working in high temperatures whose body is unable to effectively cool itself. The heating and cooling balance in the body depends on air temperature, humidity, radiant heat, physical activity, cooling, and body adjustments. When the body cannot regulate its temperature internal core heats up leading to heat stress. Heat stress can not only lead to fatal conditions for an individual, such as heat stroke but, can affect a person's ability to think and perform important safety related job task. A loss of just 2% of bodily water levels can impair job performance.

What are the symptoms of heat stress?

- Dizziness, light-headedness, blurred vision, and headache.
- Fever, usually over 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Normal body temperature is 98 F.
- Fatigue, weakness, or fainting (syncope).
- Nausea and vomiting.
- Rapid, shallow breaths.
- Severe or excessive sweating and cold, clammy (damp) skin.
- Swollen ankles or swelling in the feet and hands (heat edema).
- Weak, fast heartbeat and low blood pressure when you stand up (orthostatic hypotension).

Symptoms of heat stress may develop slowly or appear suddenly. Before heat stress symptoms appear, you may develop a red rash (heat rash) or heat cramps. These painful muscle cramps can affect any muscle, but they usually happen in the arms or legs.

Prevention

How employers can protect workers against heat stress

- Train workers in heat stress awareness and first aid
- Provide drinking water and electrolytes
- Provide rest breaks and air-conditioned rest areas
- Rotate work responsibilities throughout the day to avoid any one person exposed to extreme heat.
- Post urine color chart in washrooms to raise awareness about hydration
- Encourage workers to stay fit; to drink water
- Indoors, provide fans for air movement
- Use machines to reduce physical demands of work
- Schedule most strenuous work to cooler times of the day
- Measure daily Humidex ratings and have a Humidex Heat Stress Response Plan
- Have a heat stress prevention program specific to your workplace

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OSHA Considers Rule Changes Relating to Heat Stress

For the latest information on the rule changes being considered: https://www.safetyandhealthmagazine.com/articles/24142-whats-being-done-protect-workers-heat-illness.