



# MAFES Dawg Tracks

April 25, 2011



Prevent Heat Stress



Spring is here, but just think that in another couple of months the dear old Mississippi summer heat will be upon us. Many folks do not stop to think how serious a heat wave can be. Heat waves are sometimes called “silent killers,” because, unlike tornadoes, hurricanes and floods, there are no advanced warnings. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) reports that from 1979 to 2003, excessive heat exposure was the cause of 8015 deaths in the U.S. The CDC also estimates that 400 people die each year from exposure to excessive heat.

## **HIGH TEMPERATURE + HIGH HUMIDITY + PHYSICAL ACTIVITY = HEAT ILLNESS**

When the body gains heat faster than it can get rid of it, serious and potentially fatal illnesses may occur.

### **HEAT CRAMP –**

Heat cramps cause painful muscle spasms - resulting from the loss of salt from excessive sweating. The symptoms are pain and sweating.

#### **What should we do?**

- Get the victim to rest in a cool place.
- Give the victim cool drinks with salt and salty foods, but not salt tablets.
- Remove tight and wet clothing that may restrict the flow of blood.
- If cramps continue, seek medical help.

### **HEAT STROKE –**

Heat strokes usually occur when the body temperature rises above 106 degrees (Fahrenheit). If it isn't treated immediately, it 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 seizures and loss of consciousness.
- ❖ Possible shock and cardiac arrest

#### **What should we do?**

- ✓ Heat stroke is a medical emergency - Get medical help A.S.A.P.
- ✓ Check victim's airway, breathing and circulation - Give CPR, if needed.
- ✓ Cool victim with sponge or spray, covering with cold wet cloths. Place ice packs under groins and armpits; then fan the victim.
- ✓ Move the victim to a cool area.
- ✓ 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 –**

Heat exhaustion is 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 should we do?**

- Heat exhaustion is life threatening - Get medical help ASAP.
- Check victim's airway, breathing and circulation - Start CPR, if needed.
- Cool victim with sponge and spray, covering with cold wet cloths. Place ice packs on groins and under armpits; then fan the victim.
- Move the victim to a cool area and loosen or remove outer 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.
- ✚ Understand that you're at a particular risk if you're overweight, out of shape, over 40 years old, have a pre-existing medical condition, use medications that block sweating, abuse drugs or alcohol or have had heart stress before.
- ✚ Try to do the most physically demanding jobs in the coolest part of the day.
- ✚ On hot days, drink about 2 glasses (1/2 liter) of water before you start to work and 1 glass every 20 minutes while you're working.
- ✚ Wear loose clothes made of cotton, silk, or other fabrics that let air pass through. If working outside, wear light colors that reflect sunlight rather than absorb it.
- ✚ Wear temperature-controlled and/or anti-radiant heat or reflective clothing if instructed.
- ✚ Take frequent breaks in a cool area.

Ted Gordon-Risk Mgmt. / Loss Control Mgr.

MAFES / MSU-ES (662) 566-2201

Excerpts: Safety Smart Magazine-Summer-2009

[www.crh.noaa.gov](http://www.crh.noaa.gov)

12/2/2010