

Toolbox Talk # 1.16 – Heat Exhaustion and Sunstroke

When working during hot weather, we may suffer heat exhaustion or sunstroke. Heat exhaustion is caused by the loss of body salt, and sunstroke occurs when the body mechanism is not able to keep the system cool. Following are the symptoms of these ailments and the steps we should take to aid the victim.

Heat Exhaustion Symptoms

The first signs of heat exhaustion are dizziness, weakness, headache, blurred vision, nausea and staggering. The face becomes pale, there is profuse sweating, the pulse is weak, and breathing is shallow. The person may become unconscious.

When someone shows symptoms of heat exhaustion, immediately remove that person to a place where the air is circulating freely. Make the person lie down and keep him or her warm. If the victim is conscious, add a teaspoon of salt to a pint of cool water and give this to the victim in small sips at frequent intervals. If the heat exhaustion symptoms persist, call the doctor. Keep in good physical condition and stop to rest when you begin to feel faint. Increase dietary salt and fluids when working in extremely hot weather.

Sunstroke (Heatstroke) Symptoms

The victim develops a severe headache, the face is red, the skin is hot and dry, there is no sweating, and the pulse is strong and very rapid. The person has a high fever (105-106 degrees Fahrenheit), and may become unconscious. This is followed by convulsions, coma, and sometimes death.

Get the victim to where there's professional medical treatment as soon as possible. In the meantime place the individual in the shade. Loosen clothing and cool the victim with the best means available. If the individual's temperature starts to drop, cover with a light blanket, so that the sudden change in body temperature won't cause shivering or convulsions.

How to Avoid

Stay away from alcoholic beverages. Instead, drink water, lemonade, or citrus fruit juices. Wear clothing that is lightweight, well ventilated, and loose. Replace the body's salt loss through perspiration by making sure your salt and fluid intake is adequate. Become familiar with the symptoms of sunstroke and heat exhaustion. As we've discussed, the treatment for each of these ailments is different. And knowing the difference could mean life or death

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Project: _____

Date: _____

Supervisor: _____

Company: _____

Other safety issues covered or comments from crew members:

Attendees:

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