

TOOLBOX TALKS

The Upside of Safety



DANGER OF HEAT STRESS

A roofing company was cited when a 47-year-old laborer died after suffering a heat stroke on the third day on the job. The employee was hospitalized with a body core temperature of 107 degrees.

WHY DID THIS HAPPEN?

Your body functions best with a core temperature of between 96.8 to 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit. When you do heavy work in a hot environment, your core body temperature rises.

When you become dehydrated, your body's cooling system can't get rid of all of the heat, which can lead to:



1. Heat Stroke: This occurs when the body's temperature regulating system fails and body temperature rises to critical levels (greater than 104 degrees). *This is a medical emergency that may result in death!*

2. Heat Exhaustion: The signs and symptoms are headache, nausea, dizziness, weakness, irritability, confusion, thirst and/or heavy sweating. Workers with heat exhaustion should be removed from the hot area and given liquids to drink.

Your physical condition can increase your risk of developing a heat related illness. Age, weight, fitness level, health conditions (heart disease or high blood pressure) can all reduce your ability to deal with the heat.

HOW CAN THIS BE PREVENTED?

- Monitor the weather. Download the OSHA Heat Index app to measure the heat and humidity.
- New workers and those returning from an absence of two weeks or more should have a 5-day adjustment period.
- Make sure everyone on site is aware of symptoms of heat related illnesses and knows how to treat them.
- Wear light colored, loose clothing that allows sweat to evaporate.
- Take more rest breaks and find a shaded place to cool down.
- Drink one cup of cool water (8 oz.) every 20 minutes, even if your not thirsty.
- Start earlier in the day before the heat becomes too intense.



