



## 043: Heat Stress

### *Heat rash*

A rash appears when the perspiration glands get clogged, but the body continues to perspire. This is a sign of diminished cooling capacity.

If this condition appears, drink only water—especially avoid sodas, tea, and coffee—until it clears up.

Be especially alert to further heat stress.

After work, shower in lukewarm water to help open the pores. Raise your water intake to help prevent a recurrence.

### *Heat cramps*

These can result from drinking too much plain water under extreme exertion and perspiration. The result is a deficit of phosphorus, sodium, or other minerals the body needs.

In 2002, marathon organizers changed their water policies to prevent this condition in runners. They now limit how much water a runner can drink at any one drink station. Follow suit. Give the victim some thirst quencher, but go easy on the water.

There is no need to drink copious quantities of Gatorade or other sugary drinks, nor is there a need to take handfuls of salt tablets. When you get heat cramps, it is due to a minor imbalance and you need only a minor intake of the necessary minerals to restore balance. Use moderation.

Some massage of the cramped muscles will speed up relief.

### *Heat exhaustion*

This is characterized by clammy skin, and usually dizziness as well.

Heat exhaustion occurs when the body cannot perspire enough to cool its core temperature.

If you feel you are suffering from heat exhaustion, ask someone near you for help. You may be tempted to “wait until break” or walk to an aid station by yourself, but don’t do that. In this condition, you could easily faint and suffer additional injury.

If a coworker believes you are suffering from heat exhaustion, don’t be macho and shrug it off. Go with your coworker to an aid station or at least to a cooler place where you can begin recovery.

If you believe a coworker is suffering from heat exhaustion, escort him or her to an aid station, or at least to a cooler place. Have the coworker sit still or lie down.

Ask your coworker to loosen his or her clothing a bit to allow additional airflow.

Give your coworker some water, but don’t let him or her gulp water down—doing so may cause vomiting or bring on heat cramps.

Report the situation to your foreman or a first-aid qualified individual.

### *Discussion leader duties for this session:*

Review your first-aid training manual regarding heat-related first-aid. Be prepared to answer questions.

### *What this Safety Talk covers:*

Heat-related illnesses, how to reduce their occurrence and how to cope with them.

### *Discussion notes :*

