

## **HEAT STRESS**

### Guidelines for Combating Heat Stress

#### **Before the Heat Exposure - Select and Train**

Young persons in general good health who are physically fit and have been exercising regularly in the heat, for at least the previous week or so, face heat stress with the least danger and will be in the least discomfort. People who are obese, not in good physical condition, and who have not exercised in the heat, as well as infants and the aged, will be in the greatest danger and discomfort during heat stress.

Instruct everyone who is to be heat exposed and those responsible for the activities how to prevent heat-related illness, how to recognize the early warning signs and symptoms of heat stress, and inform them how to reduce discomfort and danger in the early stages of heat exposure.

Establish networks among people who are to be heat exposed so they can watch for developing heat stress signs and symptoms among themselves.

#### **During Heat Exposure - Control Exercise, Clothing and Exposure** (especially when humidity is high)

Heat stress develops due to heat gained from the environment AND that produced by work or exercise.

#### **DO:**

1. If working or exercising **OUTDOORS**, wear loose fitting, light colored porous clothing which allows free air circulation over the body. Wear a well-ventilated broad brimmed hat
2. If working or exercising **INDOORS**, wear as little clothing as possible. Use fans to circulate the air quickly, open windows and doors to reduce humidity and to provide air circulation and room ventilation.
3. Work or exercise in the early morning and evening hours in whatever shade is available. Work moderately over long periods, rather than intensely for short periods.
4. Drink cool, electrolyte replacement fluids in moderate amounts frequently before, during and after the heat stress.
5. Check body feelings often, and immediately discontinue exercise and get out of the heat if you feel dizzy, faint or nauseated, unreasonably irritable or panicky, sweat so heavily that it falls in drops rapidly from your face or body, or if you become aware of a rapid, pounding heartbeat.
6. If you are working with a group, check those around you frequently for the early signs and symptoms of heat stress. Get anyone who complains of feeling hot, appears disoriented, has a flushed face covered with sweat, appears irritable or seems either to stagger or be physically unstable to a shaded, cool and well ventilated area..

## **DO NOT:**

1. DO NOT exercise or work for more than brief periods either in direct sunlight or outdoors between the hours of 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. unless necessary.
2. DO NOT drink just plain water in large volumes before or after intense or prolonged bouts of exercise, or if you have been sweating heavily.
3. DO NOT depend on salt tablets to replace the body electrolytes you have lost during sweating.
4. DO NOT persist in exercising or being exposed to heat if you develop any of the early warning signs of heat stress.
5. DO NOT drink alcoholic beverages or those with high sugar content during or immediately after heat stress.
6. DO NOT drive or operate machinery if you have any of the signs and symptoms of heat stress.

## **After a Heat Exposure - Rest and Cool Down**

1. Remove or loosen clothing and either rest in a cool, well-ventilated area, or shower with tepid or cool (not cold) water.
2. Drink SMALL amounts of electrolyte replacement fluids frequently during the next hour or so.
3. Seek medical help if you feel dizzy, faint or nauseated after you have cooled down, or if you develop muscle cramps within 24 hours of being heat exposed.

## **EMERGENCY MEASURES**

### **If a person Collapses During Heat Stress:**

1. Take them to a well-ventilated and shaded area, and lay them on the ground or floor. Either remove or loosen their clothing and fan the body surface. DO NOT force the person to drink liquids. Most likely recovery will occur spontaneously and quickly if the skin is moist and cool. When the person has regained consciousness, determine if they were injured when fainting occurred. The person should be watched closely and allowed to rest for at least an hour in a cool environment before being left alone. No one who collapses during a heat exposure should be allowed to become heat exposed again for at least 24 hours, unless approved by a physician.
2. If the person either does not recover consciousness within 2 minutes, or if their skin is hot and dry, flood the skin and clothing surfaces with cool (not cold) water, fan the body surface vigorously, and SEEK EMERGENCY MEDICAL HELP IMMEDIATELY.

These guidelines are provided as an informational service. Although there are no specific rules which address occupational heat stress in Michigan, these suggestions are strongly advised to minimize the adverse effects of heat on workers. Additional information can be obtained by contacting the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth, Consultation Education and Training Division, (517) 322-1809.