

Heat Stress



Toolbox Talk #28

Working in the Heat

For majority of the year we Michiganders are begging for warmer weather. Then in late June and all of August we begin to fantasize about fall because it gets so hot here! The average temperature in the months of July and August in Michigan are in the mid-80s and most of the time this comes with high humidity. Working in these temperatures can sometimes lead to heat stress. Heat stress can result in heat stroke, heat exhaustion, heat cramps, or heat rashes. Heat can also increase the risk of injuries with workers, as it may result in sweaty palms, fogged-up safety glasses, and dizziness. Therefore, it is important that we utilize some of these safety tips to avoid harming ourselves while working in the heat!

Signs of Heat Stress

Heat Stroke- The employee will demonstrate signs of confusion, loss of consciousness, and seizures. Employee may have such a high body temperature that they may stop sweating. If this occurs first call, 911 then move the worker into a shady area, remove clothing, and pour cold water or ice all over the employee.

Heat Exhaustion- The employee may have a headache, nausea, dizziness, weakness, irritability, confusion, thirst, heavy sweating and a body temp above 100.4 °F. If this occurs, the employee should immediately find shade, drink lots of water and wash their face and body with cold water. Another employee should wait with them to ensure the symptoms stop.

Heat Rash- Employees will experience muscle pain usually caused by the loss of body salts and fluid from sweating. When this occurs, employees should drink water and sports drinks infused with Electrolytes. For example, Gatorade, Smart Water, and PowerAde.



Heat Stress Prevention

- ✚ Drink 8oz. of water every 15 minutes
- ✚ **Avoid** consuming caffeine and sugar
- ✚ When temperatures are higher than usual breaks should be longer than usual
- ✚ Try schedule outdoor work when temperatures are cooler
- ✚ **Avoid** direct sun exposure
- ✚ Temporarily increase the number of employees to complete an outdoor task so individuals can take more breaks
- ✚ **Water Rest and Shade**