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# Southwest Center

FOR AGRICULTURAL HEALTH, INJURY PREVENTION, AND EDUCATION

## Monthly Safety Blast

*Produced by the Southwest Center for Agricultural Health, Injury Prevention and Education*

**July 2019**

### Health Illness: It is a HOT topic!

The month of July seemed fitting to talk about heat illness. It's important to understand what heat illness looks like as well as the precautions one should take. OSHA launched a heat illness campaign in 2011 to help bring awareness to this hot topic. If you live in Texas or experience extremely hot summers, you may have experienced heat illness or heat stroke. Three simple words might help you remember what to do to prevent heat illness.

### Water. Rest. Shade.

According to OSHA, "Thousands of employees become sick each year and many die from working in the heat. In 2012, there were 31 heat-related worker deaths and 4,120 heat-related worker illnesses. Labor-intensive activities in hot weather can raise body temperatures beyond the level that normally can be cooled by sweating. Heat illness initially may manifest as heat rash or heat cramps, but can quickly escalate to heat exhaustion and then heat stroke if simple preventative measures are not followed. Heat illness disproportionately affects those who have not built up a tolerance to heat (acclimatization), and it is especially dangerous for new and temporary workers."

Remembering Water. Rest. Shade. could help save the lives of your workers and yourself.

An app developed by the OSHA, "allows workers and supervisors to calculate the heat index for their worksite, and, based on the heat index, displays a risk level to outdoor workers."

[https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/heatillness/heat\\_index/heat\\_app.html](https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/heatillness/heat_index/heat_app.html)

Make sure to check on your workers. Heat illness can happen quickly. Know the symptoms listed below.

**Download ‘Warning Signs and Symptoms of Heat-Related Illness’ in English and Spanish**

at <https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/warning.html>

The CDC states that some factors that might increase your risk of developing a heat-related illness include:

- High levels of humidity
- Obesity
- Fever
- Dehydration
- Prescription drug use
- Heart disease
- Mental illness
- Poor circulation
- Sunburn
- Alcohol use

Remember, Heat-related deaths and illnesses are preventable if you follow a few simple steps.

- Stay cool.
- Stay hydrated.
- Stay informed.

**BEAT THE HEAT:**  
**Extreme Heat**

Heat related deaths are preventable

**WHAT:**  
Extreme heat or heat waves occur when the temperature reaches extremely high levels or when the combination of heat and humidity causes the air to become oppressive.

**WHO:**  
Children  
Older adults  
Outside workers  
More males than females are affected

**WHERE:**  
Houses with little to no AC  
Construction worksites  
Cars

**HOW to AVOID:**  
Stay hydrated with water, avoid sugary beverages  
Stay cool in an air conditioned area  
Wear light-weight, light colored, loose fitting clothes

**Air conditioning is the strongest protective factor** against heat-related illness. Exposure to air conditioning for even a few hours a day will reduce the risk for heat-related illness.

Resources:

<https://ephtracking.cdc.gov/showHeatStressIllnessLanding>

[https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/heat\\_guide.html](https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/heat_guide.html)

<https://www.dol.gov/newsroom/releases/20140522>

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