



Safety Message of the Day for IMEA Members



Heat Stress Safety Message

Heat stress can be a killer on the job site. According to a report published by the CDC, we average 702 heat-related deaths (415 with heat as the underlying cause and 287 as a contributing cause) in the United States annually. Outside of the direct consequences such as heat stroke, heat stress can cause incidents due to loss of focus or excessive fatigue on the job.

Heat-Related Illnesses

(Source: www.WebMD.com)

Heat Cramps: Are painful, brief muscle cramps. Muscles may spasm or jerk involuntarily. Heat cramps can occur during exercise or work in a hot environment or begin a few hours later.

Heat Exhaustion: There are two types of heat exhaustion. 1. Water depletion- Signs include excessive thirst, weakness, headache, and loss of consciousness. 2. Salt depletion- Signs include nausea and vomiting, muscle cramps, and dizziness.

Heat Stroke: Heat stroke is the most serious heat-related illness. Heat stroke can kill or cause damage to the brain and other internal organs. Heat stroke results from prolonged exposure to high temperatures — usually in combination with dehydration — which leads to failure of the body's temperature control system.

Safe Work Practices to Prevent Heat-Related Illnesses

Allow for acclimatization to a hot environment before any strenuous work begins. It takes roughly two weeks for an individual to acclimate to a hot environment. Drink plenty of water during strenuous activities especially in hot environments. An average person sweats between roughly 27 oz. to 47 oz. per hour during intense labor. To put that amount into perspective, an average water bottle holds 16.9oz. Take frequent breaks in the shade or indoors where there is AC.

Summary

Take heat stress seriously. Know the signs and symptoms of heat stress. Have a plan to get the proper medical attention for any individual displaying symptoms of heat stress. When dealing with heat stroke especially, it may mean the difference between life and death.