

As spring turns into summer and brings up “hot weather,” we should all be aware of some tips to prevent heat stress. Remember physical activity at high temperatures can directly affect health and indirectly be the cause of accidents.

HEAT STRESS Prevention

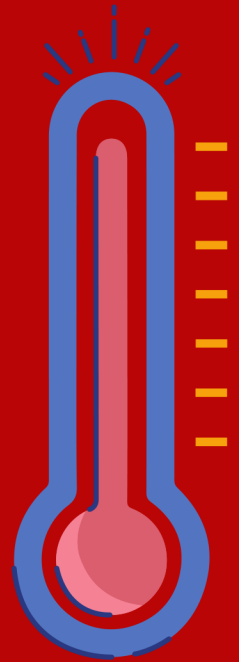
What is Heat Stress?

It is a signal that says the body is having difficulty maintaining its narrow temperature range. The heart pumps faster, blood is diverted from internal organs to the skin, breathing rate increases, sweating increases, all in an attempt to transfer more heat to the outside air and cool the skin by evaporation of sweat. If the body can't keep up then the person suffers effects ranging from heat cramps to heat exhaustion, and finally heat stroke. Dry clothes and skin doesn't mean you're not sweating! In dry climates you might not feel wet or sticky, but you are still sweating. On a very warm day you can lose as much as two liters of fluid.



Tips to Beat the Heat

- Drinking water frequently and moderately (every 15–30 minutes—about a glass full). Due to the fact that most of us already consume excessive salt in our diets; salt tablets are NOT recommended for general use.
- Resting frequently.
- Eating lightly.
- Doing more strenuous jobs during the cooler morning hours.
- Utilizing the ventilation or fans in enclosed areas.
- Remembering that it takes about 1–2 weeks for the body to adjust to heat; this adaptation to heat is quickly lost—so your body will need time to adjust after a vacation too.
- Avoiding alcohol consumption. Many cases of heat stroke have occurred the day after a “night on the town.”
- Wearing light colored, cotton clothes and keeping your shirt on—desert nomads don't wear all those clothes for nothing.



Before You Get Started

There are five basic safety tips that apply to the entire heavy construction industry. If you practice these five tips, you could make a difference.

- **KNOW YOUR JOB**
- **BE ALERT**
- **EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED**
- **USE GOOD JUDGEMENT**
- **ALWAYS THINK SAFETY**



These Tool Box Talks have been designed to include all of the information your company should be able to include in a five minute session. MITA suggests that you document this activity with the sign-in sheet that has been provided and keep it on file for future reference.

