



PRAIRIE VIEW A&M UNIVERSITY

A Member of the Texas A&M University System

July 14, 2010

OFFICE OF BUSINESS AFFAIRS MEMORANDUM No. FY10-100
Distributed via Campus Email

TO: Faculty, Staff and Students

FROM: Mary Lee Hodge, Senior Vice President for Business Affairs

RE: Summer Heat is a Real Safety Concern

Becoming overheated on the job goes far beyond causing workers discomfort. It can be deadly. And temperatures don't need to be unbearably hot in order to spell trouble for workers performing physical jobs.

Supervisors need to take measures to ensure their workers have access to water and shade and are given periodic breaks to prevent heat illness. Workers should also be encouraged to wear loose-fitting, light clothing, along with hats to protect their heads.

There are various forms of heat illness. From least-serious to most-serious, they include:

- **Heat rash:** Skin that is moist with sweat can break out in a reddish pimple-like cluster or small blisters, especially on the neck, upper chest, and groin or in elbow creases. Dusting powder may be applied to reduce discomfort. The situation usually resolves itself after the worker moves to a cooler, drier environment.
- **Heat cramps:** Physical labor in a hot environment, especially when coupled with insufficient water intake, can cause workers to develop an electrolyte imbalance that results in painful cramps in muscles fatigued by heavy labor. The solution is to drink water every 15 to 20 minutes and supplement fluid intake with sport drinks that restore a worker's electrolyte balance worker moves to a cooler, drier environment.
- **Heat exhaustion:** This is a more serious condition in which excessive heat and insufficient fluid intake cause headaches, dizziness, nausea, weakness and moist skin, lightheadedness and giddiness, fainting, mood changes (such as irritability or confusion), upset stomach or vomiting. Workers with these symptoms need to be taken to a cool area to rest and be provided water. Ice packs are also recommended to cool the worker.
- **Heat stroke:** The most serious heat illness, heat stroke occurs when the body loses its ability to regulate temperature. Without expert medical help, the victim may easily die. Symptoms include mental confusion, irrational behavior, hot and dry skin, a lack of sweating, loss of consciousness and convulsions. Medical help must be summoned immediately. Call DPS Dispatch at (936) 261-4911 immediately. Before help arrives, the victim should be taken to a shady, cool area. Clothing should be removed and the worker should be doused with cool water, fanned and given water to drink as soon as possible.

Preventing Heat Stress Conditions

- Know signs/symptoms of heat-related illnesses; monitor yourself and coworkers.
- Block out direct sun or other heat sources.
- Use cooling fans/air-conditioning; rest regularly.
- Drink lots of water; about 1 cup every 15 minutes.
- Wear lightweight, light colored, loose-fitting clothes.
- Avoid alcohol, caffeinated drinks, or heavy meals.

MLH/cpc

xc: Dr. George C. Wright