



It's Hot Out There....California Heat Stress Prevention

Summer is here, and many people are not accustomed to working and playing in hot temperatures. Heat stress is a signal that says the body is having difficulty maintaining its narrow temperature range. As a Redding employer, you have an obligation to ensure a safe work place, and the law requires businesses to have Workers' Compensation Insurance. Workers' Compensation insurance can provide the coverage to protect your business from heat stress claims.



When the body gets hot, the heart pumps faster, blood is diverted from internal organs to the skin, breathing rate increases, and sweating increases, all in an attempt to transfer more heat to the outside air and cool the skin by the evaporation of sweat. If the body can't keep up, the person suffers effects ranging from heat cramps to heat exhaustion, and finally to heat stroke.

If the body cannot get rid of excess heat, it will store it. When this happens, the body's core temperature rises and the heart rate increases. As the body continues to store heat, the person begins to lose concentration and has difficulty focusing on a task, may become irritable or sick, and often loses the desire to drink. The next stage most often is fainting and even death if the person is not cooled down. The major heat stress injuries and illnesses are heat rash, heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and then heat stroke.

Heat Stress Prevention Tips:

- Learn the signs and symptoms of heat-induced illnesses and what to do to help.
- Train the workforce about heat-induced illnesses and how to identify the symptoms.
- Drink water frequently and moderately.
- Use the buddy system (work in pairs).
- Avoid caffeine and alcoholic beverages. Many cases of heat exhaustion occur the day after a "night on the town".
- Eat lightly.
- Doing more strenuous jobs during the cooler morning hours.
- Utilize ventilation or fans in enclosed areas.
- Wear light-colored, cotton clothes and keeping your shirt on. Desert nomads don't wear all those clothes for nothing!