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HELPFUL LINKS

www.merma.org

www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/

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Preventing heat stress

Working outdoors in hot weather can be uncomfortable. But did you know it can also be hazardous? If you don't take the right precautions when working in hot conditions, you can develop heat-related illnesses. These can range from mild annoyances, such as heat rash, to life-threatening heatstroke.

Heat illness occurs when your body can't adequately cool itself through sweating. This is most likely to happen during high-temperature, high-humidity weather, especially when you perform hard physical work under these conditions. You can be at risk of the following heat-related illnesses:

- **Heat rash** consists of a red, bumpy rash that can be itchy. It's usually not dangerous, but it can be uncomfortable, and it's a sign that hot conditions are affecting your body.
- **Heat syncope** (fainting). Sometimes heat can cause you to faint. This is called heat syncope and usually occurs when a person isn't used to working in a hot environment. It's usually not dangerous, and you can prevent it by moving around a little rather than standing still for long periods of time in the heat.
- **Heat cramps** are painful muscle cramps caused by a loss of salt when sweating. Drinking electrolyte fluids to replace your body's salt can relieve heat cramps, but severe cramps may require a visit to a medical professional.
- **Heat exhaustion** is more serious. It results from the loss of fluid or salt or both through sweating. You might feel weak, dizzy, and nauseated; your skin might become clammy; and your body temperature may be above normal. To treat heat exhaustion, rest in a cool place, drink sports drinks, and remove any heavy clothing. If this doesn't help and you or a coworker starts vomiting or loses consciousness, call for emergency assistance immediately.
- **Heatstroke** is the most dangerous type of heat illness. It occurs when the body's natural cooling processes stop working and the ill person stops sweating. Symptoms include very hot and dry skin, confusion, convulsions, seizures, and loss of consciousness. Heatstroke can cause death, so call an ambulance immediately if you or a coworker shows symptoms. While you're waiting for the ambulance, try to keep the victim cool, and provide fluids if the person is conscious.

All of these heat-related illnesses can be prevented by taking some very simple steps when working in hot conditions:

- Drink plenty of water throughout the day. In hot conditions, you should aim for about 1 cup every 15 to 20 minutes.
- Wear a hat and light-colored clothing.
- Drink sports drinks to help replace the salt you lose when you sweat.
- Avoid caffeine and alcohol, which can cause dehydration.
- Take frequent breaks in a cool, shady place.
- If the temperature spikes suddenly or you're new to working in hot



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conditions, take more frequent breaks, and gradually build up your workload while your body adapts.

- If you begin to experience symptoms of heat illness, tell your supervisor, and take a break in a cool, shaded area.

Insect bites and stings

Follow these tips for preventing bites and stings when working outdoors:

- **DO** wear an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-approved insect repellent, and always follow the label directions for safe use. DEET and picaridin are two common, effective repellents.
- **DO** wear long sleeves, long pants, socks, gloves, and outdoor shoes.
- **DO** tuck your shirt into your pants, and tuck your pant legs into your socks.
- **DO** wear light-colored clothing because it makes insects easier to see.
- **DON'T** wear perfume or cologne when working outdoors because it may attract insects.

Ticks can transmit Lyme disease, anaplasmosis, and other illnesses. Only deer ticks carry Lyme disease. If you work in known tick-infested areas, check your body for ticks after every shift. If you find a tick attached to you, remove it using tweezers, and monitor your health for the next several weeks. Seek medical attention if you develop a rash or flu-like symptoms.

Spiders. Most spider bites are harmless. However, if you are bitten by a black widow or brown recluse spider, seek immediate medical attention. Symptoms of a bite can include stomach pain and cramps, difficulty breathing, nausea, sweating, twitching, shaking, and tingling in the hands.

Mosquitoes transmit a variety of diseases, including Zika virus and West Nile virus, depending on where you live. Familiarize yourself with the symptoms of the mosquito-borne illnesses common in your region, and monitor yourself for these symptoms following a mosquito bite.

Bee, hornet, and wasp stings are painful; however, unless you have an allergy, they're generally harmless. An allergic reaction can cause hives, dizziness, nausea, trouble breathing and swallowing, and loss of consciousness, and in some cases, it can be fatal. If you're allergic to bees and wasps, carry an EpiPen when working outdoors.

Workplace Violence—Active Shooter: Quiz

1. Active shooter events are often over in less than 15 minutes. TRUE or FALSE
2. Which of the following is the first and best option during an active shooter situation?
 - A. Call 911.
 - B. Evacuate the area.
 - C. Hide behind a desk.
 - D. Disarm the shooter.

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3. You shouldn't call 911 if you can't speak because you're near an active shooter.

TRUE or FALSE

4. Which of the following should you do when law enforcement arrives?

- A. Tell the police there are injured people in the building.
- B. Keep your hands in your pockets.
- C. Remain calm and cooperate with any instructions.
- D. Run to the police for safety.

eBacksafe® by Future Industrial Technologies, Inc. (FIT)

Are you looking for strategies to improve culture, morale, staffing, and safety? The eBacksafe® program is perfect for you. **eBacksafe® is a great program that is free to our member districts, it is a virtual injury prevention program designed for teachers and paraeducators, however, the information and safety tips pertains to all types of classifications including maintenance, administration, and yard supervisors.** Note: Segments of the virtual safety training were customized and filmed locally to ensure that real-life wellness scenarios were addressed.

FIT has been in business for 30 years helping school districts and other organizations throughout the US protect the health and wellbeing of employees. Fatigue, discomfort, pain, and injuries are often caused by Cumulative Micro Trauma, and when employees learn how to prevent it, their quality of life at work and home improve dramatically.

Contact Maria Lorenzana via email at mlorenzana@merma.org or by phone at (831) 296-9196 for details on enrolling your staff in the virtual eBacksafe® training program or for training on any of the topics listed on this newsletter.

July Safety Calendar

<p>July</p> <p><u>Prevent Blindness in America</u></p>	<p>July</p> <p><u>National Fireworks Safety</u></p>	<p>July</p> <p><u>National Highway Traffic Safety Administration</u></p>
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ANSWERS TO QUIZ

1. TRUE. 2. B. 3. FALSE. 4. B