

Sunshine Florida, Where Living is Cool... OR Is It?

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Warmer Weather Means Watch Out for Heat Stroke

by Sam Slay

Spring is here again. Many of us will enjoy the warmer weather by being outside more on weekends.

What about our workdays? What about our employees? We must be prepared for another hot spring and summer. We must prepare for our employees to be safe during the heat of the seasons.

Although all year may pose some heat-related concerns, this time of the year is especially dangerous to the folks who work outdoors and to some who work in confined spaces. Heat rises, and so does the opportunity for heat-related illness. Some could experience heat stroke if we don't prepare them now.

What is heat stroke? Heat stroke may occur when our body reacts to hot environments. The body becomes unable to regulate itself, and the body's internal temperature rises. Heat stroke can cause serious injury or even death.

With some occupations, heat stroke is most likely to occur: custodians, utility workers, first responders (police, fire, EMS, leisure services, etc.). However, anyone can experience heat stroke.

Here are some tips to remember to keep your employees out of harm's way.

- Drink water every 15-20 minutes when exposed to high-temperature environments.
- During longer exposures in extreme cases, or if the body has lost significant fluids due to sweating, drink sports drinks to replace electrolytes. However overuse of these drinks is not a good idea, so it is recommended that you use a 50/50 mix of water and sports drinks.
- Use fans, ventilation, or air conditioning in the work environment.
- Remember that heat-related illness can affect any employees, regardless of job responsibilities, if they are exposed to heat.

For more information or detailed training on the topic of Dealing with Heat Stress, please contact Nadine Llewellyn nllewellyn@flcities.com or Anita Wick awick@flcities.com. This training can be taken one employee at a time OR be provided in a facilitated classroom setting with multiple employees at once.

So, enjoy the sunshine and barbecues, but whether at work or at play, respond to heat effectively. Don't wait until your body reacts; it may be too late. Have a great time, and enjoy your summer.

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