HEAT STRESS 2-MINUTE SAFETY BRIEF

Company Name: _____

Heat Stress Overview

Excess heat can place an abnormal stress on your body. When your body temperature rises even a few degrees above the normal temperature of about 98.6, you can experience muscle cramps, become weak and disoriented, and become dangerously ill unless you help your body cool down. If your body temperature rises above 105 degrees, your condition can be fatal. Persons who work in hot environments — foundries, kitchens, laundries, and the like — must take special care to avoid heat stress. The following guidelines can help you keep cool in the heat and avoid the dangerous consequences of heat stress.

Adapting To Hot Conditions

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) suggests that all workers exposed to extreme heat gradually acclimate to their environment over a 1-week period. This means that on your first day in a hot environment, you may only be able to do half as much work as a fully adapted worker. Each day, your workload increases slightly until you can operate at "full steam."

Staying Hydrated

Sweating is one way your body cools itself. Sweating results in water loss, and the only way to replace the loss (and help your body continue to cool itself) is to drink water frequently. Ideally, you should drink at least 8 ounces of water every 20-30 minutes while working in hot environments.

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Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for hot environments can range from ordinary work clothes made from "breathable" fabrics to specially designed suits cooled by air, ice, and even portable air conditioners. Check with your supervisor about the proper PPE for specific tasks.

Engineering Controls

Your employer may also provide engineering controls such as fans, ventilators, exhaust systems, and air-coolant or conditioning systems. These controls can help reduce worksite temperatures to more adaptable levels. Other controls, such as using heat shields and insulating heat-producing machinery, can also help lower the environmental temperature.

Recognizing Warning Signs

Persons working in hot environments should become familiar with first-aid techniques for heat stress. If you or someone you know suffers from heat exhaustion, cramps, or other signs of heat stress, get medical attention immediately. Keep your cool; heat stress is dangerous, but it's also preventable.

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