**Heat Illness Prevention**



As the weather begins to shift into warmer temperatures, it is time again to dial in your Heat Illness Prevention Program. Even construction workers that feel they are used to working in hot temperatures should be monitored periodically throughout the day for symptoms of heat illness. And did you know that employers are *required* to provide water rest and shade to workers who work in extreme heat? Unfortunately, dozens of workers die each year and many more become ill while working in extreme heat or humid conditions. Your written workplace safety program should address heat related exposures and explain how your company protects workers from heat illness and how they will respond in a heat related emergency. Remember, if workers are not trained to respond to a co-worker showing symptoms of heat illness, the chances of survival are greatly reduced. When workers are trained about Heat Illness Prevention, they will not only help watch each other for symptoms but they can also monitor their own exposure. For anyone who has ever experienced heat exhaustion, it is the precursor for a very serious heat related illness called heat stroke which can be fatal. It is a horrible condition that can render you helpless and unable to move. When heat exhaustion hits, you may not be able to remove yourself from the heat, at which point a co-worker would hopefully recognize the symptoms and realize that this is an emergency situation.

In a heat related emergency, employers should consider the following responses.

1. Take the affected worker to a cooler area where there is shade or air conditioning.
2. Cool the worker immediately. Use active cooling techniques such as immersing the worker in cold water or an ice bath. Create an ice bath by placing any available ice into a large container with water. This is the best method to cool workers rapidly in an emergency. Remove outer layers of clothing, especially heavy protective clothing. Place ice or cold wet towels on the head, neck, trunk, armpits, and groin. Use fans to circulate air around the worker.
3. Never leave a worker with heat-related illness alone. The illness can rapidly become worse. Stay with the worker.
4. Call 911

For assistance in developing a Heat Illness Prevention Program, or for other construction industry safety questions and concerns, please contact PGM Safety Services, an affiliate company of Pro Group Management. We stand ready and eager to assist. Visit us at www.pgmnv.com or call (800) 859-3177.

