

## **SAFETY ALERT - Summer Heat**

The hot and steamy summer weather is upon us and MSHA would like to remind everyone to think safety first during these days of extreme temperatures.

Heat-related deaths and illness are preventable yet annually many people succumb to extreme heat. Historically, from 2001-2010, excessive heat exposure caused 1,145 deaths in the United States. In 2010, 138 deaths were caused by excessive heat exposure, according to statistics from National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Workers who are exposed to extreme heat or work in hot environments may be at risk of heat stress. Exposure to extreme heat can result in occupational illnesses and injuries. Heat stress can result in heat stroke, heat exhaustion, heat cramps, or heat rashes. Heat can also increase the risk of injuries in workers as it may result in sweaty palms, fogged-up safety glasses, and dizziness.

During hot weather you will need to increase your fluid intake, regardless of your activity level. Don't wait until you're thirsty to drink. Heavy sweating removes salt and minerals from the body. These are necessary for your body and must be replaced. If you must work outside, drink two to four glasses of cool, non-alcoholic fluids each hour.

Prevention of heat stress in workers is important. Employers should provide training to workers so they understand what heat stress is, how it affects their health and safety, and how it can be prevented.

Warning signs of heat stress vary but may include the following:

- Red, hot, and dry skin (no sweating)
- Rapid, strong pulse
- Throbbing headache, dizziness, nausea
- Confusion
- Unconsciousness - **This late stage of heat-related illness is life threatening. Call 9-1-1 or your local emergency number.**

**REMEMBER:**  
**Safety depends upon what you**  
**DO or DON'T DO.**

