

# **gbca** **SAFETY** TOOLBOX TALKS

## **Heat-Related Stress and Illness Toolbox Talk**

Hot summer months pose special hazards for outdoor workers. Construction workers are prone to heat stress in various high temperature settings, such as on rooftops, or in open excavation sites which may also lack air movement. Heat-related illness may initially manifest itself as a rash or cramps, but can quickly escalate to heat exhaustion and heat stroke if simple preventative measures are not followed.

### **What is Heat Stress?**

- Heat stress occurs when the body is unable to cool itself by sweating.
- Heat stress can lead to heat-related illnesses such as heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

### **Symptoms of Heat Exhaustion:**

- Headache, dizziness, lightheadedness, fainting
- Weakness and moist skin
- Mood changes, irritability, confusion
- Nausea, vomiting

### **Symptoms of Heat Stroke:**

- Dry, hot skin with no sweating
- Mental confusion or loss of consciousness
- Seizures or convulsions
- Note: Heat stroke can be fatal

### **Preventing Heat-Related Stress and Illness:**

- Know symptoms of heat-related illnesses
- Block out sun or other heat sources
- Use fans or A.C. units
- In high heat, drink 1 cup of water every 15 minutes
- Wear lightweight, light colored, loose fitting clothes
- Avoid alcohol, caffeinated drinks, or heavy meals
- Wear sunscreen of SPF 15 or higher and reapply every 2 hours

### **Treating Heat-Related Stress and Illness**

- **SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION IMMEDIATELY and CALL 911**

### **While Waiting for Emergency Response Teams:**

- Move worker to cool, shaded area
- Loosen or remove heavy clothing
- Provide cool drinking water
- Fan and mist person with water