

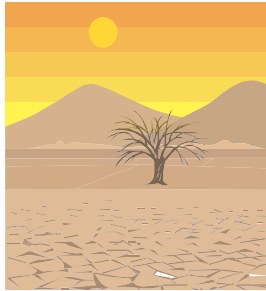


# TDCJ Risk Management's Training Circular

Volume 9 Issue 05

Risk Management Issues

May 2009



# MAY "COOL IT"



**Another Texas summer is here!** We can look forward to heat, humidity and more heat and humidity, flat hair, and sweating at 6:00 in the morning. This is what we call a Texas Summer. Since we can't put our life on hold and we have to continue with our daily responsibilities and activities in the heat, we can learn heat precautions to help reduce the risk of any heat related illness.



The Agency understands that the temperature levels affect the unit staff and offenders who are working in areas of high temperature and humidity levels. Due to the heat, tempers sometimes run as high as the humidity levels. Just face the fact, it is **HOT!**



employee annual heat awareness training.

As summer months approach, the occurrence of heat related illnesses rise. **Recognition and prompt treatment of these symptoms are imperative.** Victims of prolonged or high heat can develop heat cramps or heat exhaustion. If heating continues, the condition can progress to a heat stroke and death.

### What are the Symptoms

**Heat Cramps**-are the most benign heat syndrome. They develop usually following strenuous exercise in muscles that have been subjected to extensive work. The pain is brief, intermittent and crampy but may be excruciating.

**Treatment**-consists of rest in a cool environment and replacement of fluids.



Did you know that it is a lot easier to prevent a heat related illness, than to treat a heat related illness? During prolonged heat waves, the risk of heat related illnesses, injuries and deaths climb dramatically.



The Agency has Administrative Directive AD-10.64 that addresses the temperature extremes in the workplace. The Agency takes measures to protect staff and offenders within the agency from heat related illnesses. This directive contains information on the preventive measures to take as well as a Heat and Humidity Matrix chart. The TDCJ Department of Preventive Medicine in conjunction with UTMB will conduct



**Heat Exhaustion**-is the most common heat syndrome. The warning signs of heat exhaustion can be mild or severe, but all important danger signals. Symptoms include weakness, anxiety, fatigue, thirst, dizziness, headache, paleness, muscle cramps, nausea or vomiting and faintness. The onset is usually sudden and duration of brief collapse.



**Treatment**-consists of moving the patient to a cool area and having them lie down and elevate the feet. Spontaneous recovery then usually starts taking place. If the patient is fully alert encourage small sips of water.



**Heat Stroke**-is a true medical emergency. Heat exhaustion can progress to a heat stroke. A sudden change in the level of consciousness in a setting of heat exposure suggests the possibility of a heat stroke. Heat strokes occur when the body's cooling system fails. The skin is hot and dry, pulse rate, respirations are rapid and weak. Coma, paralysis and death can follow if emergency treatment is not immediately given.

**Treatment**-once a heat stroke is suspected rapid, aggressive therapy aimed at lowering the body temperature should be initiated immediately by whatever means available. In field, remove the patient from the external sources of heat, remove clothing, and promote evaporative cooling by applying cool or iced water to the entire skin by surface sponging or splashing, accompanied by fanning either by hand or mechanical means. This should be continued throughout transportation to an emergency room receiving facility as well. Always transfer heat stroke victims to a medical facility.



Heat can be fatal to anyone, but people over 60 years old appear to be a higher risk for death from heat illness, especially if they are frail or have pre-existing heart disease, respiration problems or diabetes. To lesser extent, babies and young children, people with a history of alcoholism and others using certain drugs and medications are at high risk of heat illness. People most at risk of heat illness



from exertion may include; athletes, military personal, and manual laborers.



### How can you avoid heat illness during excessive heat?

As record-breaking high temperatures are here to stay for a few months throughout Texas, the Texas Department of Health (TDH) has issued a list of precautions people can take to reduce the risk of heat exhaustion and heat stroke. All Texans are urged to follow these precautions.

- \* Drink two to five times more water and non-sugar, non-alcoholic beverages to replace fluids lost in perspiration.
- \* Wear loose-fitting, lightweight, light-colored clothing and wide brimmed hats while in the sun.
- \* Use sunscreen with an SPF-15 or more.
- \* Take frequent breaks limiting physical activity.
- \* Rest in a cool place.



- \* Stay in an air conditioned area if possible. If no air conditioning is available, fans are helpful.



- \* Use the buddy system between co-workers in high heat jobs.

- \* Older people should have a friend or relative check on them or call twice a day.



- \* When planning activities choose cooler hours to be outdoors.

- \* Before prolonged work or exercise outdoors, listen to weather forecasts and give special attention to advisories



### One Final Reminder

Heat related illnesses can strike anyone in any occupation. The occupations from which heat related injuries are reported to Risk Management range from field security staff working outdoors in the sun to administrative staff working indoors at a cubicle. So, remember, drink plenty of liquids to keep your body hydrated and *stay cool!*



### Heat Advisory

The national weather service issues alerts for excessive heat on a county-by-county basis. The alerts are broadcast on NOAA Weather radio and on local radio and television stations. The parameters of an excessive heat watch, warning, and advisory vary by location.

- \* **Excessive Heat Watch**—means conditions are favorable for an event to meet or exceed local excessive heat warning criteria in the next 12 to 48 hours.

- \* **Excessive Heat Warning**—means that heat values are forecast to meet or exceed locally defined warning criteria for at least two days.

- \* **Excessive Heat Advisory**—means hazardous heat conditions have begun or will begin within 36 hours and, if caution is not exercised, they could become life threatening



### Animals



Animals are also susceptible to heat stroke, or hyperthermia, which is considered an emergency as it is with people. Signs in animals include excessive panting, increased body temperature, heart rate, or respiratory rate, unusual salivation, collapse, stupor, seizures, or coma, redder than normal gums.

**Treatment**—get the animal out of the direct heat and spray it with cool water or place water-soaked towels on the head, neck, feet, chest and abdomen. Take the animal to the veterinary hospital. Animals can't explain their needs, so it is up to us to take extra care during hot weather conditions, to ensure their needs are met.



### Water Safety

Now that summer is here, we start looking for ways to stay cool. Several ways come to mind, but the one that most people enjoy is **WATER!**. The following are some safety tips from the American Red Cross. Go have a big **SPLASH**.



- \* According to the American Red Cross learning to swim is the best thing anyone can



do to stay safe in and around water. Always swim with a buddy; never swim alone. The American Red Cross offers courses for people any age or swimming ability. To enroll in a swimming course, contact your local **Red Cross Chapter** today.

- \* Swim in areas supervised by a lifeguard or an adult. (*If swimming in a unit pool, use extreme caution as a lifeguard may not be present*).



- \* Read and obey all rules and posted signs.

- \* Children or inexperienced swimmers should take precautions, such as wearing a U.S. coast guard-approved personal flotation device when around water.



- \* Watch out for the dangerous **"too's"**-too tired, too cold, too far to swim.
- \* Set rules for the whole family to follow based on

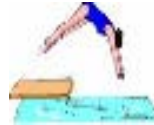
swimming abilities.

- \* Be knowledgeable of the water environment you are in and the potential hazards, such as depth, currents, obstructions.

- \* Pay attention to weather conditions and forecasts. Get out of the water at the first indication of bad weather.



- \* Use a feet-first entry when entering the water.



- \* Enter headfirst only when clearly marked for diving.

**Don't Drink and DROWN**

- \* Do not mix alcohol with swimming, diving or boating. Alcohol impairs your judgment.

- \* Know how to prevent, recognize, and respond to emergencies.

- \* Knowing how and when to administer CPR in an emergency situation will save a life. Your local chapters of the **American Heart Association**, the **American Red Cross**, and local hospitals are good sources for finding a CPR course in your area. Taking a CPR class could help save a life-someday.



Go out and have a great summer with friends and family.



Training Circular  
TDCJ Risk Management Department  
Volume 09 Issue 05  
May 2009

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