

Army Safety Gram



ARMY SAFE STRONG

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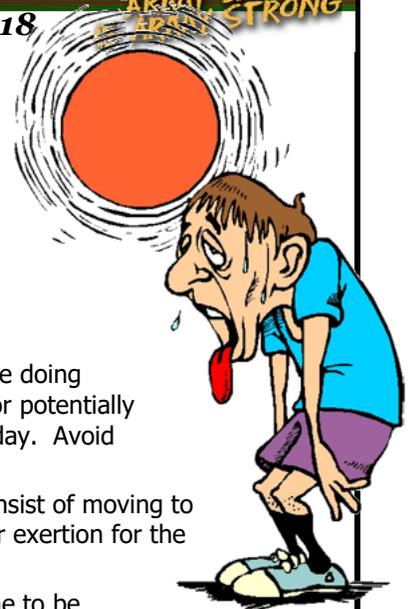
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Dealing with the Summer Heat

Some people love the heat, while others can't wait for the dog days of summer to give way to blessed fall-like conditions. Regardless of your personal viewpoints on hot weather, everyone must take precautions to know and avoid heat illness.

Here are some suggestions for smoother sailing in the summer:

- ◆ **Let the water flow.** People often wait until they are thirsty to drink water but if you are doing physically demanding work and become dehydrated, you can't catch up and are at risk for potentially fatal heat illness. Don't wait for thirst, but instead drink plenty of water throughout the day. Avoid alcohol or caffeine and stay away from hot, heavy meals.
- ◆ **Take frequent rest breaks when working in hot conditions.** These breaks can consist of moving to a cooler area or switching to lighter work for a while. Whenever possible, plan outings or exertion for the early morning or after dark when temperatures are cooler.
- ◆ **Acclimate to working in hot conditions.** When the hot weather hits, expect everyone to be sluggish for a few days until they adjust. Get used to working in the heat gradually. You cannot go from working in comfortable temperatures to working full tilt in a heat wave. Allow for frequent rest breaks in the shade and alter work routines to reduce heavy exertion in the heat of the day.
- ◆ **Be smart about exercising.** It's important to seek out cooler places to run or walk, such as a shady park, along an ocean beach or in an air-conditioned gym. If the weather is unbearably hot and humid and you can't stand the thought of missing out on your exercise, then plan on taking advantage of the cooler weather early in the morning or around sunset. Don't forget to take time to cool down. It is easier on your heart than suddenly stopping vigorous exercise. A cool down period can also help prevent muscle cramps. Leave time for this important part of your workout.
- ◆ **Wear hats and dress in light-colored, lightweight, loose clothing.** They should be using sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15 and reapplying it if they are sweating it off. Workers who are overweight or have medical conditions should ask their doctors about additional precautions to take while working in hot conditions, whether indoors or outdoors.
- ◆ **Don't stop taking medication unless your doctor says you should.** Take extra care to stay cool and ask your doctor or pharmacist for any special heat advice.
- ◆ **Watch each other for signs of heat illness.** Mild cases can be treated by moving the person to a cool area and supplying water to drink. Heat stroke is a life-threatening condition that calls for immediate medical help.
- ◆ **Never leave children, disabled persons, or pets in a parked car – even briefly.** Temperatures in a car can become life threatening within minutes. On an 80-degree day with sunshine, the temperature inside a car even with the windows cracked slightly can rise 20 to 30 degrees above the outside temperature in 10 to 20 minutes. There have been cases where the inside temperature rose 40 degrees!



Every summer many areas undergo periods of seriously hot weather. Make sure you know how to avoid heat illness at work and off the job.