

THE HEAT IS ON

The summer temperatures have been soaring well into the 90's and even peaking above 100. Add to that a humidity that refuses to quit and you're left with heat indexes upwards of 105 or more in some places! For truckers, this sort of extreme heat can typically be an afterthought. You're in your cab enjoying the air conditioning compared to the unlucky souls who have to climb up onto a roof and swing a hammer for most of the day. It's not the climate controlled driving that causes the issue. It is the rest of the job, such as loading and unloading, coupling or uncoupling, performing maintenance, etc. that can lead to trouble. There have been several reports already this summer about drivers experiencing different forms of heat fatigue from heat exhaustion all the way up to heat stroke.

STATS

According to the National Safety Council, heatstroke is the most serious and life-threatening heat-related illness. Each year, between the months of May and August, it is estimated that approximately 600 deaths occur due to heat-related exposures.

HEAT EXHAUSTION VS HEAT STROKE

In certain circumstances, your body can build up too much heat, your temperature may rise to life-threatening levels, and you can become delirious or lose consciousness. If you do not rid your body of excess heat fast enough, it "cooks" the brain and other vital organs. It is often fatal, and those who do survive may have permanent damage. The two most common heat related illness are heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

Heat exhaustion may occur after exposure to high temperatures for several days, which given this summer's temperatures isn't a far-fetched scenario in which to find yourself. Typically, heat exhaustion goes hand in hand with dehydration but could also be the result of a loss of electrolytes as well. Thus, there are two types of heat exhaustion, water depletion & salt depletion. Water depletion is typified by thirst, weakness and headache, while the symptoms of salt depletion are more drastic including nausea and vomiting, dizziness, and even muscle cramps.

Heat stroke is more dangerous than heat exhaustion and is actually a form of hypothermia. It has both physical and neurological

symptoms which if left unchecked can do significant damage to a body and even lead to death. Like heat exhaustion, heat stroke is also a result of dehydration and extreme temperatures within the body. In the case of heat stroke however, the consequences are significantly worse. Heat stroke is considered a medical emergency and needs to be treated immediately. Some heat stroke symptoms truckers need to be on the lookout for are high body temperature, not sweating but red faced, difficulty breathing, hallucinations, and disorientation.



WHAT CAN BE DONE TO PREVENT HEAT ILLNESS.

- Limit your exposure to direct sunlight as much as possible. Work and park in shaded areas when possible.
- Drink more fluids (non-alcoholic). Do not drink fluids that contain caffeine or large amounts of sugar. Sport drinks are good as they replace electrolytes and salt in your body. Avoid extremely cold fluids as these can cause stomach cramps. Drink often throughout the day 4-6 ounces at a time.
- Wear light-weight, light-colored and loose-fitting clothing that does not create a safety hazard for your work environment. If outdoors, wear a hat to reduce direct exposure to the sun.
- Avoid hot foods and heavy meals. They add heat to your body.
- Consider packing a cooler with enough water for the entire day.

SUMMARY

In the transportation industry, every season has its challenges. Summer is no different. With record heat torching virtually every corner of the country, it is important to fully understand what you can do to protect yourself from the higher temperatures and humidity.

August, 2019
The Shield
The Heat is On
Quiz



Driver Name: _____ Date: _____

Please Print

Driver Signature: _____

Please circle one correct answer for each question.

1. Between which months do the most deaths occur due to heat related illness?
 - a. November - January
 - b. April - June
 - c. May-August
 - d. None of the above
2. The two types of heat exhaustion are water depletion and _____ depletion.
 - a. salt
 - b. mineral
 - c. sugar
 - d. all of the above
3. Heat stroke is a form of hypothermia.
 - a. True
 - b. False
4. Heat stroke is considered a _____ and needs to be treated immediately .
 - a. common occurrence
 - b. disease
 - c. medical emergency
 - d. all of the above
5. Which of the following are ways to prevent heat related illness?
 - a. Limit your exposure to direct sunlight as much as possible.
 - b. Wear light-weight, light-colored and loose-fitting clothing distracted, inexperienced or impaired.
 - c. Avoid hot foods and heavy meals
 - d. all of the above

