Heat Illness

SafeTips from the Naval Safety Center

Quick and easy summaries to find out about something new you're doing or as a refresher for something you haven't done in a while. They're a great training tool to pass around at meetings, through e-mail, or post on bulletin boards.

Know how to recognize the three most common types of heat-related illness: heat stroke, heat exhaustion, and heat cramps.

Heat strokes are the most severe and can be fatal. Symptoms include an elevated temperature to 105° to 110° F; hot, red, and dry skin; a rapid, weak pulse; and rapid, shallow breathing.

As first aid for a heat stroke, call 9-1-1 immediately. Wrap damp sheets around the victim and start fanning them. Wrap cold packs in a cloth and place them on the victim's wrists and ankles, in the armpits and on the neck. Caution: Prolonged cold after temperature has been reduced may cause hypothermia.

Victims of heat exhaustion will have a normal temperature, but will have other symptoms: cool, moist, pale skin; heavy sweating; headache, nausea or vomiting and dizziness.

Heat cramps are muscular pains and spasms that result from intense exertion. Cramps most often attack the abdomen and legs.

To avoid heat– related illnesses:

* Wear lightweight, light-colored clothing.
* Drink plenty of water.
* Take regular breaks.
* Eat small meals.