

In the Safety Zone™

A newsletter dedicated to safety awareness

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Avoid Heat Related Safety Hazards



The summer season is in full swing! Most of the country is experiencing record heat. While we look forward to longer days and several months of increasingly hot temperatures, we must remain mindful that working in the summer heat can be very dangerous. Extreme temperatures can cause a range of ailments. Workers exposed to hot and humid conditions are at risk of heat-related illness, especially workers performing heavy labor or those that are required to wear bulky protective clothing.

Heat affects the body by reducing blood flow to the brain, muscles and organs. It's important to recognize heat-related symptoms if they do occur. Below are four of the most common ones:

- **Heat rash.** Red patches (sometimes raised with bumps) appear. Although this is more uncomfortable rather than dangerous it is a sign that the temperature is having an effect, and it can be an undesirable distraction.
- **Heat stress.** This common reaction to high temperatures, especially when accompanied by strenuous activity, can result in thirst, tiredness, dizziness, and even difficulty seeing
- **Heat cramps.** These painful muscle spasms in arms, legs, or intestines are caused by losing salt while sweating.
- **Heat exhaustion.** A person suffering from this common response to strenuous activity in the heat is likely to feel weak and possibly dizzy and/or nauseous. You may have chills, clammy skin, and profuse sweating.

Wearing lightweight, loose-fitting clothing is least likely to cause prickly heat rashes. Taking cool showers after the work or play periods, followed by a sprinkling of talcum powder or cornstarch, will help relieve irritation. Wearing a hat to provide shade for the face and lightweight clothing also helps to keep the body cooler.

Always pace yourself when driving and working in the heat and keep hydrated. Water should be considered a part of your personal protective equipment (PPE) when it comes to the summer heat! Keep a dry towel or handkerchief with you to wipe your hands or brow if you're prone to sweating. This will reduce the risk of objects slipping from your hands as well, placing you or other at further risk of injury.

Never attempt to operate vehicles or equipment if you are feeling ill or fatigued. Pull over to a safe, legal spot and call for assistance.

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Let Cooler Heads Prevail –Avoid Road Rage

While incidents of road rage have been on the rise over the past several years, it's hard not to notice that when temperatures rise, drivers are increasingly less tolerant of their fellow drivers on the road. There are more drivers on the roads and highways during the summer months. Add to this - hot temperatures, road construction and traffic jams - it creates the perfect setting for road rage.

Several driver surveys performed in recent years indicate that more than 50% of drivers who are subjected to aggression on the road respond with aggression. Commonly, surveys show that people believe road rage is the result of triggers like feeling rushed, speeding and just being in traffic. This increases the risk of more serious confrontations. The most common issues likely to cause road rage are:

- **Not using a signal when turning;**
- **Not keeping pace with traffic;**
- **Tailgating;**
- **Cutting a driver off;**
- **Using mobile devices while driving.**

The best way to avoid road rage is to drive defensively. Err on the side of being courteous to your fellow drivers. Keep a safe distance between your vehicle and the one in front of you. Always signal before changing lanes. As drivers, we each have the responsibility to be as safe as we can.

Road rage is a controllable event. We often forget that it takes two people to fight. So when we are subjected to aggressive driving, the best way to avoid road rage is not to respond to the aggressive behavior. We have a choice over whether to engage in aggressive behavior or retaliate against an insult-whether real or perceived. It's a wiser choice to ignore the aggressor. Only you can choose to be drawn into a confrontation. So the next time you're driving and someone cuts you off or honks at you, keep your cool and set a good example. That way, *everyone* on the road is much safer.



Plan and Prepare When Handling Materials

Many accidents and injuries occur as materials or goods are being delivered. Handling materials involves *both* manual labor *and* equipment to make the process easier. Whether you are moving materials manually or mechanically- you need to first plan and prepare to ensure that it is done in a safe and efficient manner. You have pre- and post-inspection checklists to use as part your safety arsenal. Add a mental checklist before lifting and moving materials – and keep these thoughts in mind to ensure your safety:

- ⇒ **Be sure that your load is balanced.** Whether handling materials manually or using equipment, a balanced load will significantly reduce the risk of accident or injury.
- ⇒ **Secure the load.** Are all the straps secure? Is there evidence of wear or fraying on the straps? *Never attempt to deliver a load that is not secure.*
- ⇒ **Plan your route.** When moving a load, always look at least ten feet ahead in the direction you are traveling and also try to visualize the path for at least two corners ahead of you.
- ⇒ **Prepare for placement.** Before you pick anything up, you must be prepared to set it down. If you are handling material, you don't want to hold it longer than necessary.
- ⇒ **Use all available safety equipment to load and unload material.** That's why you have it!
- ⇒ **Don't block your vision.** You should always be able to see where you are going.

When moving materials and goods from one place to another, planning and preparation are the keys to preventing accidents and injuries!

Get Your Rest!



Driving in the summer's heat can cause fatigue. It's important to stay hydrated and get plenty of rest. Drowsiness is a condition that most drivers fail to recognize, and it can be as dangerous as drunk driving.

Drowsiness is a factor in a substantial number of crashes. Studies have shown that 60 percent of motorists have driven while feeling fatigued and more than one-third admitted to having fallen asleep at the wheel at one time or another. Here are some signs that you need to stop and rest:

- Difficulty focusing, with frequent blinking
- Daydreaming or not remembering the last few minutes driven
- Head nodding
- Repeated yawning or rubbing of your eyes
- Drifting out of a lane, tailgating or hitting shoulder rumble strips

If you recognize any of these signs while driving at any time, pull over at the next place that is both legal and safe and take a brief rest. Always comply with hours of service rules regarding maximum driving times.