



TOOLBOX TALK #26

Be Cool in Summer Heat

One of the reasons our industry exists is to enable people to get away from the outdoors. Our buildings, largely, accomplish the purpose of separating people and things from the elements that we work in each day. There is a reason for that, and it's not just for personal comfort.

We are approaching a time of year when things will begin to heat up. We need to make sure our bodies don't heat up beyond a safe point. Heat stress is a serious hazard in our industry. Every year, workers on construction sites suffer from heat stress, and in some cases it can lead to heat stroke, permanent injury and even death. Signs to watch out for are a rapid heartbeat, dry skin (you are hot but quit sweating), disorientation and nausea. If you feel any of these symptoms or observe them among your co-workers, report to me immediately, for a cool down break. Drink plenty of water (or other company-provided beverage) throughout the day.

Another thing to pay attention to is that more accidents occur in hot work conditions. Safety experts attribute this to reduced mental alertness and other factors related to physical conditions when working in the heat. Sweat can cause a slip and fall hazard, heat can fog safety goggles and dizziness due to high temperatures can result in hazards to you and your co-workers.

As you become acclimated to the heat, you will be less immediately affected by it, but don't let this result in a false sense of security. Everyone here feels comfortable working in the summer heat, but so do most of the people who at some point are overcome by it. Heat is one of those things that can impair your judgment once it begins to affect your core temperature, so don't rely on yourself. Follow policy. Keep your body hydrated, stay alert and watch out for one another.

Facilitator Notes: This is a basic, introductory talk on summer safety. As the temperatures rise, additional discussions will take place. Be sure your crew understands they should drink fluids throughout the day regardless of thirst. Ask your crew if they have experienced any of the symptoms of heat stress – most of them have – and make clear this is time to cool down.

Additional Notes: _____

Crew Member Comments: _____

Presented By: _____

Date/Time _____

Attendees: _____

List additional attendees on back of sheet