Summer in Minnesota means high humidity and sunny, hot days—not exactly a picnic for workers, especially if you work outside or in a non-air-conditioned work environment.

Serious, potentially life-threatening illness can strike fast. DO NOT TAKE HEAT STRESS LIGHTLY!

Here are some reminders for controlling the heat before it’s too late:

- Drink consistently throughout the day before you get thirsty. Adequate fluid intake is the biggest key. Cool (not ice cold) water is the best drink for maintaining hydration.

- Take your breaks. Again, drink lots of fluid. On a hot, humid day, you can’t drink enough water. Aim for as much as 6 to 8 ounces of water every 15 to 20 minutes. That’s 3 gallons a day on a hot and sunny day.

- Know the symptoms. Heat exhaustion occurs when you fail to replace fluids lost through perspiration. Workers with heat exhaustion continue to sweat, but experience weakness, fatigue, nausea, or a headache. The skin is clammy and moist, and the worker is pale or flushed. Move to a cool area, lie down, slightly elevate your legs, and slowly drink small amounts of water.

- Heat stroke is life threatening! Symptoms include high body temperature, red and dry skin, rapid breathing and pulse, headache, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and seizures. The victim may be disoriented, confused, or unconscious. Call 911 and immediately move the victim to a cooler area. Remove outer clothing and immerse the victim in cool water or apply cool wet towels or clothes to the body. Do not give the victim liquids to drink. Treat for shock until professional medical help arrives.
Additional Information for Presenters
Review the information provided on the reverse side of this safety tip sheet. Please refrain from reading the information verbatim—paraphrase it instead.

Talking Points:
According to the National Safety Council Injury Facts 2004, between 300 to 600 people die annually because of natural (hot weather) heat stress.

OSHA Standards That May Apply:
1910 General Duty Clause (general industry)

Links:
Occupational Safety and Health Administration
www.osha.gov/SLTC/heatstress

Minnesota Safety Council
www.mnsafetycouncil.org

National Safety Council
www.nsc.org

Centers for Disease Control and Protection, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health
www.cdc.gov/niosh

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