



## Safety Newsletter

# Prevent Heat Illness

**HEAT ILLNESS CAN BE DEADLY.** Every year, thousands of workers become sick from exposure to heat, and some even die. Heat illnesses and deaths are preventable. Employers are responsible for protecting employees from the risks associated with excessive heat.

### What is heat illness?

The body normally cools itself by sweating. During hot weather, especially with high humidity, sweating isn't enough. Body temperature can rise to dangerous levels if precautions are not taken such as drinking water frequently and resting in the shade or air conditioning. Heat illnesses range from heat rash and heat cramps to heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Heat stroke requires **immediate medical attention** and can result in **death**.

### How can heat illness be prevented?

Employers are required to establish a complete heat illness prevention program to prevent heat illness. This includes: providing workers with water, rest and shade; allow for "acclimatization" by gradually increase workloads and allow more frequent breaks for new workers or workers who have been away from work for a week or more to build a tolerance for working in the heat; modify work schedules as necessary; plan for emergencies and train workers about the symptoms of heat-related illnesses and their prevention; and monitor workers for signs of illness. **Workers new to the heat or those that have been away from work and are returning can be most vulnerable to heat stress and they must be acclimatized (see box).**

To prevent heat related illness and fatalities:

- Drink water every 15 minutes, even if you are not thirsty.
- Rest in the shade to cool down.
- Wear a hat and light-colored clothing.
- Learn the signs of heat illness and what to do in an emergency.
- Keep an eye on fellow workers.
- "Easy does it" on your first days of work in the heat. You need to get used to it.

If workers are new to working in the heat or returning from more than a week off, and for all workers on the first day of a sudden heat wave, implement a work schedule to allow them to get used to the heat gradually. Working in full sunlight can increase heat index values by 15 degrees Fahrenheit. Keep this in mind and plan additional precautions for working in these conditions.

### Who is affected?

Any worker exposed to hot and humid conditions is at risk of heat illness, especially those doing heavy work tasks or using bulky protective clothing and equipment. Some workers might be at greater risk than others if they have not built up a tolerance to hot conditions, **including new workers, temporary workers, or those returning to work after a week or more off.** This also includes everyone during a heat wave.

Industries most affected by heat-related illness are: construction; trade, transportation and utilities; agriculture; building, grounds maintenance; landscaping services; and support activities for oil and gas operations.



# NATIONAL SAFETY MONTH



Join NSC and thousands of organizations across the country as we work to raise awareness of what it takes to stay SafeForLife. Observed annually in June, National Safety Month focuses on reducing leading causes of injury and death at work, on the roads and in our homes and communities.

Each week in June, we will be providing downloadable resources highlighting a different safety topic:

## Week 1 (through June 12)



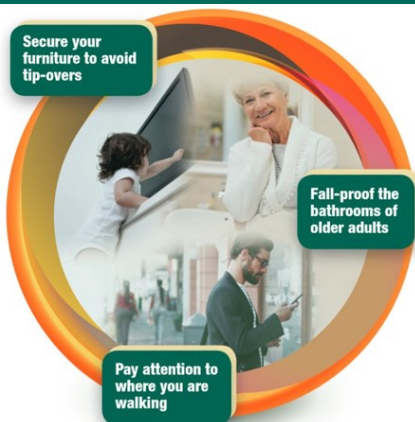
## Week 2 (June 13-19):



## Stand Ready to Respond

## Be Healthy

## Week 3 (June 20-26):



## Week 4 (June 27-30):



## Watch Out for Dangers

## Share Roads Safely

# Week 1

## Preparing today can make a difference tomorrow

On any given day, anything can happen, from a slip and fall at home to a natural disaster near your workplace. By assessing potential risks and having a plan to respond, you will be steps ahead in the event of an incident, wherever it occurs.

### Get Trained in First Aid and CPR

Even the fastest paramedics could take 8 to 12 minutes to get to a patient after calling 9-1-1. Being trained in first aid and CPR could mean the difference between life and death.



### When trained in first aid, the following steps are helpful in the event of an emergency:

- Recognize the emergency
- Check the area for safety (If it's not safe, don't enter)
- Check the victim and ask for permission to provide assistance
- Call 9-1-1 when appropriate
- Care for the person
- Have the person seek medical attention when needed

### When calling 9-1-1, be prepared to give this information to the dispatcher:

- Your name
- The phone number you are using
- The location and number of victims
- The victim's approximate age, sex and condition (Responsive? Breathing? Bleeding?)

# Week 2

## Reach for safer medicine

Every day we make decisions that have a direct impact on our health. Making smart food choices and exercising regularly can help keep us in shape and avoid many injuries. However, if an injury does occur, we can still protect our health when deciding what medications to take. Prescription painkillers such as Oxycontin, Percocet and Vicodin account for more drug overdoses than heroin and cocaine combined. These legally obtainable drugs are highly addictive and actually less effective than a combination of ibuprofen and acetaminophen.



### What Are the Signs of Opioid Painkiller Addiction?

It's not always easy to tell if someone is addicted to opioid painkillers. Experts say common symptoms include:

- Excessive mood swings or anxiety
- Sleepiness
- Slurred speech
- Confusion or poor decision making
- Small pupils or shallow breathing
- Continually "losing" prescriptions so more must be written
- Seeking prescriptions from more than one doctor
- Stealing, forging or selling prescriptions

### Should You Work or Drive While Taking Opioid Painkillers?

Certain side effects of opioid painkillers could hinder your ability to drive or work safely. These side effects include:

- Dizziness
- Sleepiness
- Blurred vision
- Confusion or unusual thoughts
- Delayed reaction
- Difficulty following directions



# Week 3

## Being safe means being alert — all the time

Even in familiar surroundings, we need to constantly be looking for dangers around us throughout our day. Keeping an eye out for hazards can help you identify and avoid them before an injury occurs. Looking at the world through this safety lens can help you protect yourself and those around you



### Watch Where You're Going

Distracted walking is on the rise for people of all ages. With so many things competing for our attention, safety needs to be a priority.

- Check your emails and send your texts before you start walking
- Duck into a doorway or move off to the side to make a call, send a text or answer emails
- Never cross the street while using an electronic device and make sure you can hear traffic and sounds around you
- Scan ahead for cracks on the ground, spills or changes in elevation

### Protect the Older Adults in Your Life

Falls are a leading cause of death for older adults. There are changes we can make to protect ourselves at any age.

- Use non-skid mats or appliques in the bath and shower
- Install grab bars in the tub, shower and near the toilet, and railings on the stairs
- Provide adequate lighting in every room and stairway
- Place nightlights in the kitchen, bathroom and hallways

# Week 4

## The roads belong to us all: Let's make safe choices

The nation's roadways are a place of constant risk, with millions of vehicles moving alongside one another. Since it's impossible to control the choices of everyone on the road, we need to be defensive drivers. Getting behind the wheel is a time for patience and focus – qualities that can help you avoid a collision should someone else make a bad decision.



### Be Distraction-free

Thousands of crashes have involved distracted driving. Anything that prevents a driver from being able to safely operate the vehicle should be avoided.

- Never use a cell phone behind the wheel, even hands-free
- Pre-set your navigation system and music playlists before driving

### Check Your Speed

Speeding was a factor in 28 percent of all traffic fatalities in 2014. Speeding reduces the amount of time a driver has to react in a dangerous situation to avoid a crash.

### Avoid Impairment

An average of one alcohol-impaired driving fatality occurs every 53 minutes in the U.S. But impairment can also include being under the influence of drugs – both legal and illegal.

- Designate an alcohol and drug-free driver or arrange alternate transportation
- Check the side effects of your medications before getting behind the wheel

**FAST STAT:** In an average year, speeding is involved in 27 traffic deaths every day during June, July and August.

Source:  
NSC Analysis of National Highway Traffic Safety Administration FARS