

# ArcFlash



**SAFETY COMMITTEE NEWS BULLETIN** IN PARTNERSHIP WITH **CONSTRUCTION SAFETY COUNCIL**

**POWERFORWARD DUPAGE SAFETY COMMITTEE MISSION**

**“To pursue a ‘Safety Always’ work environment for all working craftsmen and women through education and training”**



## Preventing Heat Illness

By: Paul A. Satti, M.S., CHST  
Technical Director, Construction Safety Council

Construction workers generally work outside and are exposed to heat and the damaging effects of the sun. Electricians also have to endure the stresses of working in enclosed spaces while wearing heavy protective clothing. Too much heat, especially if combined with high humidity can harm your health and interfere with work. Hot, humid conditions can cause heat exhaustion, cramps, and even fainting. A CSC study of fatalities reported last year (2012) between the summer months of June – September revealed that 11 workers died from sudden illness, most of which were reportedly caused by hot and/or overworked conditions. When your job is hot, know the precautions and take action to prevent heat related illnesses. If you supervise employees, learn your responsibilities under the Occupational Safety & Health Act; know the law.

The Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) has an on-going heat prevention campaign to remind us of these three words: **water, rest, and shade**; go to [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov) for more information on OSHA's heat prevention campaign which includes useful links and even a heat app downloadable for various mobile devices. Although no specific OSHA regulations regarding heat stress exist, everyone can agree that these dangers are real. OSHA's General Duty Clause reminds us that those employers have a responsibility to protect against any recognized hazards that are likely to cause death or serious physical harm, especially when a feasible and useful method is available to correct the hazard. Working in the heat, especially when a “heat advisory” warning is being issued, employers must consider the hazards associated with heat stress and implement work practices and controls. These include:

- Monitoring the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Heat Index chart and training workers to recognize the signs and symptoms of heat stress, heat exhaustion and heat stroke.
- Employers should encourage workers to drink water at liberty and establish provisions for a work/rest regimen when working outside. Water coolers must be clearly marked and tightly closed.
- Ensure that a shaded area is available to workers. When working inside, recognize how enclosed spaces can add to the heat index; electrical workers may find themselves in utility rooms and other poorly ventilated spaces (i.e., attics, crawlspaces, etc...) supervisors must take note of these potential “hot spots” and take extra precaution.
- Recognize that the wearing of arc rated clothing and other personal protective equipment will add to a worker's heat stress and provide cooling packs, forced air ventilation or other forms of comfort.

Additional information OSHA's health and environmental standards, refer to 29 CFR 1926 Subpart D. Go to [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov) to learn more, or contact the Construction Safety Council at 708-544-2082 x 213 for more information about \*Health Hazards in Construction.

\*Health Hazards in Construction – 4 hour course; go to [www.buildsafe.org](http://www.buildsafe.org) for course description and schedule.



**Until next time, the Construction Safety Council in conjunction with PowerForward DuPage (NECA-IBEW 701 LMCC) reminds you to *Work Smart, Build Safe.***

