

If You Can't Take the Heat

Summer is finally here and the weather is heating up. Something people may not think too much about is heat related illness, but this is something that people need to be aware of both on and off the job. On average, 384 people die each year from heat related illnesses.

There are many symptoms of heat related illness and each should be taken very seriously. Here are some of the symptoms of heat related illness:

- **Heat Cramps** – Caused by heavy sweating, draining your body's salt. To treat move to a cool area and drink cool salted water (1 tsp salt per gallon of water).
- **Fainting** – Caused when not enough blood flows to the head. To treat move to a cool area, lay down, and sip cool water until medical personnel arrive.
- **Heat Exhaustion** – Caused by inadequate salt and water intake. Some of the signs are heavy sweating, cool moist skin, being tired, weak, feeling confused, and being very thirsty. Treat by seeking medical attention immediately. This condition can lead to heat stroke and even death.

So what can you do to avoid heat related illness? There are several preventative measures you can take to reduce your risk. Here are just a few:

- **Acclimate** yourself to the weather prior to long durations of physical activity.
- **Maintain** fluids throughout the day. Don't rely on thirst as an indicator of dehydration; your body loses water faster than you realize.
- **Eat** smaller, well balanced meals more often. Doing this keeps your body from producing a lot of heat and losing a lot of water during digestion.
- **Pace** yourself during hot weather. Take frequent breaks and keep hydrated.
- **Dress** for the weather; light-weight, light-colored loose-fitting clothing is best.

If you keep these tips in mind, you should be able to keep cool when things heat up. Enjoy your summer!

Easily Overlooked Summer Safety



Summer provides a lot of opportunity for fun activities that most people don't get to enjoy all year round. Because of this, it's easy to forget the safety hazards that may exist when doing certain things. Here are some general safety tips to keep in mind while partaking in your summer endeavors.

Poison ivy – "Leaves of three, let them be!" While working around the yard, keep an eye out for these, and make sure your kids know what they look like as well.



Bees – Know where they are, and don't disturb them. They like to hide in junk piles and secluded areas. If attacked, run away but don't jump into water! The bees will still be waiting for you when you come up for air.

Fire ants – Whether camping or just picnicking, avoid them at all costs! They are dark reddish-brown in color, and will attack anything that disturbs their mound. Their mounds are typically hard to distinguish from regular ant mounds, so if you are unsure, just keep away!



Fungal infections – Don't let your FUN turn FUNgal! Summer heat and humidity make us sweat more and add moisture to our bodies, creating a good setting for fungus to grow. The most common form of fungal infection is athlete's foot, but many others exist. Try to stay dry and keep your body well ventilated!



The Result of Fatigue

At approximately 7:30 PM a driver operating a Volvo tractor and Great Dane trailer leaves Munster, IN headed toward Minneapolis, MN – about 435 miles away. At 1:58 AM the driver had gone nearly 325 miles when his truck veered off the right side of the highway. This caused the driver to react by swerving to the left, resulting in his tractor and trailer rolling over and blocking both westbound lanes of traffic on I-94.



1 minute after this truck had rolled over, a 55 passenger motorcoach carrying a group of marching band members from Chippewa Falls High School collided with the overturned tractor and trailer. When the collision occurred, the tractor was separated from the trailer, and the tractor swung around into the left side of the motorcoach, while the trailer rotated clockwise into the right side of the motor coach.

When the accident occurred, the pavement was dry and weather was clear. The highway was not lighted. The driver of the semi claimed to have been slowing his truck down to pull off to the side of the road, however his truck was found in 10th gear after the collision. In an investigation conducted by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) it was later determined that **the driver of the semi had fallen asleep at the wheel.** It was also determined that the earliest the motor coach driver could have seen the overturned rig would have been when he was 227 feet away. While traveling approximately 70 miles per hour, and taking into consideration the truck was hard to see since its reflective tape was not showing, its lights were off, and there was no highway lighting, it would have been nearly impossible for the motorcoach to have avoided the collision.

This accident occurred in October of 2005. Now, nearly 4 years later, the truck driver has been convicted on 5 counts of false logs in the days leading up to the accident. There were multiple occasions in which *the driver's log had shown he was in the sleeper berth when GPS and toll records prove that he was actually driving.* **This driver falsified his logs to cover up the fact that he did not get the required amount of rest.** As a result, 5 people (including the motorcoach driver) were killed in the accident, and another 35 were injured.

Some people have made the case that the motorcoach driver might have been able to lessen the severity of the accident if he would have been able to react quicker. Unfortunately, we will never know his side of the story. What we **DO** know is that if the semi driver had taken the necessary steps to prevent fatigue, (first and foremost taking time off!) he would not have fallen asleep at the wheel, would not have rolled his truck, and there never would have been a collision involving the motorcoach.

So what can **YOU** do to prevent something as awful as this from happening to you? Here are some often-forgotten pointers that, whether you realize it or not, may save lives of countless innocent people on the road:

- If you become drowsy, **stop driving!** It's not worth the risk.
- Try to maintain a consistent sleep schedule where you sleep the same amount of hours each day.
- Drink a caffeinated beverage or an energy drink. These usually take about a half hour to take affect, so take a 30 minute nap while you wait.
- Take periodic naps. Power napping can make a difference!
- Stop regularly to get out of the truck, walk around and get your blood flowing!

Fatigue: Warning Signs

- Daydreaming
- Difficulty focusing
- Frequent blinking
- Heavy eyelids
- Trouble remembering last few miles driven
- Missing exits
- Yawning repeatedly
- Rubbing your eyes
- Trouble keeping your head up
- Drifting from your lane
- Tailgating
- Feeling restless/irritable

Information for this article and photos courtesy of NTSB.

