



Short Safety Subject

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www.bragg.army.mil/psbc-bm/PubsAndForms/ShortSafetySubjects.htm

Safety Rules For Excessive Heat

Summer usually includes a "heat wave" or two when the temperature reaches the high 90s or above. This type of heat...along with the humidity...produces conditions that can lead to heat cramps...heat stroke...or heat exhaustion. Following are some definitions of terms used during heat waves and safety rules to be followed to avoid heat related illnesses.

Heat wave: prolonged period of excessive heat and humidity.

The national weather service will issue a heat advisory when the heat index will be at or over 105 degrees during the day and around 80 at night for at least two consecutive days.

Heat index: a number in degrees Fahrenheit that tells how it really feels when relative humidity is added to the actual air temperature. Exposure to full sunshine can increase the heat index by 15 degrees.

Heat cramps: muscular pains and spasms due to heavy exertion. They usually involve the abdominal or leg muscles. It is generally thought that the loss of water from heavy sweating causes the cramps.

Heat exhaustion: typically occurs when people exercise heavily or work in a warm humid place where body fluids are lost through heavy sweating. Blood flow to the skin increases...causing blood flow to decrease to vital organs. This results in a form of mild shock. If not treated...the victim's condition will worsen...body temperature will rise...and heat stroke may occur.

Heat stroke: also called sunstroke...is a life-threatening condition. The victims temperature control system...which produces sweating to cool the body...stops working. The body temperature can rise so high that brain damage and death may result if the body is not cooled quickly.

Safety rules

Slow down. Avoid strenuous activity. If you must do strenuous work...do it during the coolest part of the day...usually in the morning between 4 am and 7 am.

Stay indoors as much as possible. If air conditioning is not available...stay on the lowest floor...out of sunshine. Circulate the air with fans. Remember...electric fans do not cool the air...but they do help evaporate sweat which cools your body.

Wear lightweight light colored clothing. Light colors will reflect away some of the sun's energy.

Drink plenty of water regularly and often. Water is the safest liquid to drink during heat emergencies. Avoid drinks with alcohol or caffeine. They can make you feel good briefly...but make the heat's effects on your body worse. Drink plenty of fluids even if you do not feel thirsty.

Eat small meals more often. Avoid foods that are high in protein...which increase metabolic heat. Avoid salt tablets unless directed by a physician.