



## Short Safety Subject

Short Safety Subjects are provided by the Public Safety Business Center, Fort Bragg, NC. Our intent is to provide safety topics for the purpose of increasing safety awareness and improving safety performance. Additional Short Safety Subjects are available on the PSBC Business Management Web Site at:

[www.bragg.army.mil/psbc-bm/PubsAndForms/ShortSafetySubjects.htm](http://www.bragg.army.mil/psbc-bm/PubsAndForms/ShortSafetySubjects.htm)

### The Heat Is On

We couldn't wait for the nice weather and now we find that the heat is becoming a little warmer than we anticipated. Temperatures in the summertime can rise to well over 100 degrees. People coming to this area from cooler climates need about two weeks to become acclimated to these hot temperatures. With the hot days of summer upon us, we all tend to spend more time outdoors, exposing ourselves to some major hot weather hazards. Here are some of the problems you should be aware of:

#### Sunburn

The sun is a potent source of ultraviolet radiation, especially when the sun is straight overhead. While moderate doses of the sun's ultraviolet light give you a deep, dark tan, overdoses cause sunburn. Knowing the effects of sunlight will help you protect yourself from the pain of sunburn. These factors fall into three main groups:

- Individual susceptibility.
- Conditions determining the amount of ultraviolet radiation you're exposed to.
- Length of exposure time.

The longer the exposure times, the worse the sunburn. Many people seem to forget that sunburn symptoms appear several hours after overexposure. Atmospheric conditions, time of year and nearby reflective surfaces greatly influence the amount of exposure.

#### Sunstroke

This is a very dangerous condition caused by overexposure to sun or heat and can result in death. Heat stroke happens when your body's heat regulating mechanisms are paralyzed from excessive heat. People who are unaccustomed to the heat are the most susceptible. These are the symptoms of sunstroke:

- Headache
- Visual disturbances and dizziness
- Feeling of oppression
- Flushed face

- High temperature
- Rapid and full pulse
- Skin hot and dry

If you recognize someone with these sunstroke symptoms, send for an ambulance and then take the following first-aid steps:

- Move the person to a shaded area and loosen his/her clothing.
- Lay the patient on their back and elevate their head and shoulders.
- Apply cold packs to the head, as the brain is more rapidly affected by high temperature.
- Wrap the person's body in a sheet, or other material, and pour on cool water. Fan the wet material to increase evaporation and reduce temperature.
- Rub the person's limbs in an upward direction toward their heart.
- If transporting the person to the hospital, continue treatment en route. Leave windows open so airflow will continue to help cool the person's body temperature.
- Do not give the person any stimulants like caffeinated drinks.

### **Heat Exhaustion**

Heat exhaustion is not quite as life threatening as sunstroke, but it's still very important to begin first aid right away. Heat exhaustion is the result of excessive sweating and loss of fluids and salts from the body. The symptoms of heat exhaustion are:

- Muscular cramps, aching limbs and joints.
- Dizziness, nausea and staggering.
- Frequent vomiting.
- Profuse sweating (especially around the face and forehead), and clammy skin; excessive sweating is the main sign a person is suffering from heat exhaustion and not sunstroke.
- Dry mouth.
- Weak pulse and shallow breathing.
- Possible unconsciousness for short periods.
- The person may feel cold - their body temperature is low

Since heat exhaustion results from dehydration of body fluids and salts, it's important to rehydrate the person. Take the following steps:

- Move the person to circulating air.
- Keep the person warm and administer stimulants, like coffee or caffeinated soft drinks. Only give stimulants if you're sure the person is not suffering from sunstroke.
- Get the person to drink water, slightly salted if possible.
- Place the person's head level or lower than his/her body.

### **Heat Cramps**

Heat cramps also result from excessive sweating and loss of bodily salts, and will be quickly relieved by replacing these lost salts. Salted water or solutions should be administered promptly.