TOOL BOX SAFETY TALK
Summer Heat Safety

Heat can cause serious problems. When the weather is hot, your body works overtime trying to stay cool. Excess heat escapes through sweating, exhalation of air, and increased blood flow to the skin. Hot weather can overwhelm those mechanisms, leading to uncomfortable and oftentimes harmful symptoms.

Heat problems are preventable with the proper precautions. Be aware and enjoy the summer.

Symptoms of Heat-Induced Ailments:

- Dehydration – thirst, less frequent urination
- Prickly heat bumps – irritating skin rash
- Cramps – painful muscle contractions
- Edema – swelling of hands and feet
- Exhaustion / Fatigue – characterized by clammy skin, paleness, dizziness, nausea, fever, and headache

Seek immediate medical help if you or a coworker develops the following symptoms that may be a Heat Stroke – the most severe of heat illness which is a life threatening situation:

- Lethargy, sluggishness
- Rapid heart rate and breathing
- Confusion, disorientation, agitation, irritability
- High body temperature
- Intense muscle aches, fever, diarrhea, or nausea
- Convulsion, fainting, seizure, loss of consciousness

HEAT STROKE IS A MEDICAL EMERGENCY – CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY

Support an employee suffering from Heat Stroke while you are waiting for help to arrive. You can assist the person by doing the following:

- Get the person out of the heat to a cooler environment – take indoors if possible
- Fan the person with a newspaper or towel – to cool the body
- Loosen clothing and sprinkle the skin lightly with water
- Elevate feet to direct blood flow back towards the head
- If available: apply icepacks to the groin area or to armpits
Some are at greater risk than others to suffer heat-related illness:

- Those persons who are physically ill or have heart disease or high blood pressure
- Those persons who must work in/wear protective equipment: helmets, respirators, heavy clothing

How to beat the heat – some prevention tips:

- Drink more water to prevent dehydration
- Wear loose fitting, lightweight, light colored clothing
- Avoid drinking liquids that contain caffeine or large amounts of sugar – these cause a loss in body fluids
- Electric fans may provide comfort, but when temperatures soar in the 90s, fans do little to prevent heat-related illness
- Medications – consult your health care provider or pharmacist to see which medicines are affected by heat conditions