

Construction Safety Toolbox Talk: Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for Hot Weather

Good morning, team. Today, we are going to talk about the importance of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) during the hot summer months. We have been in hot temps already this year, but as temperatures rise, so do the risks associated with heat-related illnesses and other hazards. It's crucial that we adjust our PPE and practices to stay safe and healthy on the job.

Importance of PPE in Hot Weather

Wearing the right PPE can protect us from injuries, sun exposure, and heat-related illnesses such as heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Even though it might be tempting to skip some PPE in the heat, doing so can put you at risk.

Key PPE for Hot Weather

1. Lightweight, Breathable Clothing:

- Use PPE made from breathable materials that allow sweat to evaporate, helping to cool your body. Look for clothing with moisture-wicking properties.
- Wear long sleeves and pants to protect against sunburn and UV exposure while ensuring they are light enough to not overheat.

2. Hard Hats with Sun Protection:

- Use a hard hat with a brim to protect your face and neck from the sun.
- Consider using a sunshade attachment or a neck flap to provide additional coverage.

3. Safety Glasses with UV Protection:

- Wear safety glasses that block 99-100% of UVA and UVB rays to protect your eyes from sun damage.

4. High-Visibility Clothing:

- Ensure high-visibility vests are made from lightweight, breathable materials. Bright colors can also help keep you visible and safe on site.

5. Sunblock and Lip Balm:

- Apply sunscreen with at least SPF 30 to all exposed skin and reapply every two hours or more often if sweating heavily.
- Use lip balm with SPF to protect your lips from sun damage.

6. Hydration Packs:

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- Consider using a hydration pack to provide easy access to water and encourage regular drinking.
- Stay hydrated by drinking small amounts of water frequently, rather than waiting until you're thirsty.

7. Cooling Towels or Bandanas:

- Use cooling towels or bandanas around your neck or head to help regulate body temperature.

Tips for Working Safely in Hot Weather

- **Acclimatization:**
 - Gradually increase your exposure to hot conditions over a week to help your body adapt.
- **Regular Breaks:**
 - Take regular breaks in shaded or air-conditioned areas to cool down.
- **Work Scheduling:**
 - Schedule heavy tasks during the cooler parts of the day, such as early morning or late afternoon.
- **Buddy System:**
 - Work with a partner to monitor each other for signs of heat stress, such as dizziness, excessive sweating, or confusion.

Recognizing Heat-Related Illnesses

- **Heat Exhaustion:** Symptoms include heavy sweating, weakness, dizziness, nausea, and headache. If you or someone else shows these symptoms, move to a cooler place, drink water, and seek medical attention if necessary.
- **Heat Stroke:** This is a medical emergency. Symptoms include high body temperature, confusion, fainting, and lack of sweating. Call 911 immediately and try to cool the person down until help arrives.



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Conclusion

Remember, safety comes first. In hot weather, it's essential to adapt your PPE and stay vigilant for signs of heat-related illnesses. If you have any questions or concerns about PPE or working in the heat, please speak up. Stay safe, stay cool, and take care of each other out there.



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