

TOOLBOX TALK #51

KEEP WORKERS HYDRATED

Proper hydration is essential for preventing heat-related illnesses. In a recent published tip sheet, OSHA explains that our bodies heat up as we work and cool down through sweating. This can lead to dehydration and a heat-related illness.



Tips for employers:

- Educate workers on the importance of hydration and what to avoid
- Equip all work areas with accessible and visible cool water (less than 60°F)
- Encourage workers to drink at least 1 cup (8 ounces) of water every 15-20 minutes while working in the heat, not just when they're thirsty
- Maintain a cool or shaded location for rest breaks
- Designate a relief person so workers can take a water break, or have water brought directly to workers who can't leave their work area
- Encourage workers to keep a sealable bottle of cool water in their work area so they can hydrate
- Consider providing electrolyte products when workers perform strenuous, sweat-producing job tasks for extended periods of time

Taking scheduled meal breaks, OSHA adds, will help replace lost electrolytes.