Safety Matters

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News & Notes

HEAT RISK FACTORS AND COUNTERMEASURES

August is known for some of the hottest weather of the summer. So, in case we get a heat wave this month, be prepared. Safety and health experts say there are several factors that increase the risk of heat stress on really hot days, including:

- **Your physical condition—**If you're overweight or out of shape, you may be more affected by heat.
- **The kind of work you're doing—**Doing heavy physical work, working around heat-producing equipment, or working out in the sun can put you in danger faster.
- **Heavy protective clothing** that traps body heat.
- **Some medications** that can interfere with the body's cooling system.
- **Your age—**Older people have less body water and lower sweat gland efficiency.
- **Drinking a lot of caffeine**
- **Not drinking enough water**
- **Not taking enough time to get used to the heat** slowly and build up endurance.

Some risk factors you might not be able to change when a heat wave hits. But there are things you *can* do to decrease the risk. For example:

- ✓ **Drink water** steadily on hot days. Drink at least 16 ounces before physical exertion and 5 to 7 ounces every 15 or 20 minutes while physically active. Even if you're just sitting, drink plenty of water.
- ✓ **Wear light, loose clothing** and wear a hat to protect your head against the sun.
- ✓ **Work at a steady pace** and try not to overexert.
- ✓ **Take regular breaks** in a cool place.

RIDDLES OF THE MONTH

(1) I look flat, but I am deep; Hidden realms I shelter. Lives I take, but food I offer.
At times I am beautiful. I can be calm, angry and turbulent.
I have no heart, but offer pleasure as well as death. No man can own me, yet I encompass what all men must have. What am I?
(2) I go around in circles, but always straight ahead. Never complain, no matter where I am led. What am I?
(3) Two bodies have I, though both joined in one. The more still I stand, the quicker I run. What am I?

Answers on Page 2 Safety Bits & Pieces

Hot and Hazardous

How to survive a heat wave

Heat illness is a risk when temperatures rise into the 90s or higher, as they often do in August. Whether working, playing sports, or exercising, it's easy to push your body too far and suffer the consequences when it gets too hot.

Here's a simple formula that explains the risk:

High temperature
+ High humidity
+ Physical exertion
= Heat illness

Your individual risk depends on whether you take proper steps to prevent your body from overheating. Use this checklist to stay safe in the summer heat.

Do you:	**YES**	**NO**
• Dress appropriately for the heat?	❑	❑
• Slow down in a heat wave and take breaks to rest and cool down?	❑	❑
• Stay out of the sun as much as possible?	❑	❑
• Drink plenty of water all day?	❑	❑
• Take your physical condition, age, and other risk factors for heat illness into account?	❑	❑
• Watch for signs of heat stress, including fatigue, headache, dizziness, nausea, and general weakness?	❑	❑
• Keep an eye on co-workers for symptoms of heat illness?	❑	❑
• Report any symptoms immediately to a supervisor?	❑	❑
• Know first aid for heat illness?	❑	❑

Be prepared. Follow these few simple precautions in a heat wave to prevent illness.

"But I thought I was your best friend!"

SAFETY TIPS OF THE MONTH

Consider these office set up safety tips:
1) Even if your job requires sitting, you can break up work periods by walking about. Walk at breaktime, see someone instead of emailing, or get up more frequently to copy and fax.
2) Adjust your chair to avoid back strain. Change the height, back position and tilt. Have your knees level with your hips and your feet flat on the floor. If you are still uncomfortable, change chairs.
3) Place your computer screen at eye level, and position the monitor 12 to 30 inches away from your eyes. The monitor should be an arm's length away with the top of the screen at eye level.
4) Position the phone, stapler and other frequently used objects in an accessible position so you don't have to stretch or twist to reach them.

Safety Bits & Pieces

FIRST AID FOR SUNBURN

The sun is sizzling, and if you're not careful you could get burned. These steps can help for most cases of sunburn:

- Take cool baths or gently apply cool, wet cloths to the burned area.
- Apply moisturizing cream, aloe, or hydrocortisone cream.
- Lightly bandage blisters with gauze to prevent infection.
  —Don't break blisters because this slows healing and increases risk of infection.
  —When blisters break and skin peels, remove dried fragments and apply anti-septic ointment or hydrocortisone cream.
- Take aspirin or acetaminophen to relieve pain and headache, and reduce fever.
- Drink plenty of water to replace lost fluids.
- Avoid further exposure until the burn has healed by covering up when in the sun.

RIDDLES OF THE MONTH ANSWERS

1) The ocean
2) A wheel
3) An hourglass

"Which is the deep end?"

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

Two caterpillars were sunning themselves in the garden when they spotted a butterfly overhead. It fluttered, swooped, rose again and floated on the air currents.
One caterpillar turned to the other and said:
" There's no way you'll ever get me up in one of those contraptions!"

QUOTATION OF THE MONTH

"Time is the coin of life. It is the only coin you have, and only you can determine how it will be spent. Be careful lest you let other people spend it for you."

Carl Sandburg (1878 - 1967)
American Writer, Editor and Poet

It's Going to Be a Hot One!

Know what to do if you start to overheat

The sun's beating down. Shimmering heat waves dance on the pavement. Your clothing is soaked with sweat and you start to feel light-headed. On days like this, you could develop heat-related illness. To protect yourself, you need to recognize the symptoms and know the appropriate first aid.

- **Heat Rash**
  Symptoms: Red, bumpy rash that often itches
  First aid: Rest in a cool place and keep skin dry and clean.
- **Heat Cramps**
  Symptoms: Painful muscle cramps
  First aid: Drink fluids, such as water or electrolyte fluids, which replace lost water and salt.
- **Heat Exhaustion**
  Symptoms: Weakness, dizziness, or nausea; clammy skin; complexion pale or flushed; vomiting and loss of consciousness in severe cases
  First aid: Rest in a cool place and drink plenty of fluids, preferably electro-lyte fluids to replace lost salt as well as body fluids.
- **Heatstroke**
  Symptoms: No sweating; hot and dry skin; confusion, convulsions, and loss of consciousness possible
  First aid: Call for an ambulance; remove heavy outer clothing and keep victim cool by soaking clothes with water or spraying with mists of water; place ice packs under armpits and groin area; give liquids to conscious victim only.

From the State of Delaware's Office of Highway Safety...

Summer Traffic Safety 101

Class is in session! What class, you ask? Traffic Safety 101, where the course of study is safe driving behaviors.

What you need to know

Did you know that in Delaware a crash is reported every 25 minutes and a person is injured nearly every hour? More disturbing, on average, a traffic-related fatality occurs every 3 ½ days. Consider these facts:

* Over a three year period, the deadliest months of the year were June, July, and August.

* So far this year, 46% of all crashes have been caused by aggressive driving behaviors, including speeding and failure to yield the right of way.

* Pedestrian deaths are again on the rise in the First State. Eleven pedestrians have been killed so far this year, accounting for almost one-quarter (21%) of all persons killed.

* Fortunately, alcohol-related deaths have declined so far this year when compared to this date in 2011, but DUI arrests are climbing steadily. Nearly 2500 people have been arrested in 2012.

What you can do

Every day there is a traffic crash in the news. The majority of them are preventable if everyone would follow the rules of the road:

* **Respect the Sign –** Drive calmly and in control. Be aware of others on the road. Follow posted traffic signs and signals.

* **Drive Sober** – Always have a safe ride home. Designate a sober driver or plan a safe route home with DART.

* **Respect your Ride** – Know your motorcycle. Know the road. Wear appropriate safety gear.

* **Be visible while walking and biking** – Be safe. Be seen. Only cross the road at marked intersections and cross walks.

* **Always buckle up** – A seat belt is your best defense against unsafe drivers.

This is one class that you do not want to fail because the consequences can be deadly. Apply what you have learned and you will graduate Traffic Safety 101 at the head of the class. **Drive Safe. Arrive Alive DE.**