



FROM THE ISAO SAFETY COMMITTEE: **DEHYDRATION**

Dehydration occurs when the human body loses more fluids than it takes in. Such an imbalance can compromise our ability to work safely and effectively. The consequences of dehydration can range from mild discomfort to even death. Understanding the significance of adequate hydration and how dehydration can affect the body can help you to stay safe while at work.



DESCRIBE THE HAZARDS

- ◆ Environmental conditions: working outdoors involves hazards including high temperature, humidity, and prolonged sun exposure
- ◆ Heat stress occurs: when your heat load (from the environment, physical activity, etc.) is greater than your ability to cool yourself
- ◆ Heat dehydration occurs: when your body loses too much fluid from sweating in high temperatures
- ◆ Inadequate breaks and limited water access: the nature of outdoor work, on equipment, or in trees means we don't always take breaks when we need them and a water source isn't always immediately available
- ◆ Physically demanding work in high temperatures can lead to excessive sweating and fluid loss which can lead to heat stress and heat stroke

- ◆ Replenish lost electrolytes. Replace lost salts and minerals by consuming beverages that contain electrolytes. Even a small pinch of salt in your bottle will do. Remember to avoid sugary drinks as they can further contribute to dehydration.
- ◆ Monitor urine output. Ensure that you are drinking enough water to pass pale/light colored urine
- ◆ Avoid drinks that will dehydrate you. This includes drinks containing caffeine, alcohol, and sugar. These types of drinks will lead to increased fluid loss and exacerbate dehydration.
- ◆ Take a break if needed. When starting your day, allow your body to get accustomed to the heat. If you are experiencing dizziness, fatigue, or have a rapid pulse, take a break in a shaded area.

DISCUSS CONTROL MEASURES

- ◆ Bring a large water bottle to work. Aim to drink about a cup of water (240mL) every 15-20 minutes while working in the heat (about 1L every hour). Regularly sipping water will help maintain fluid balance.

DEMONSTRATE KNOWLEDGE

- ◆ Recognize the symptoms of dehydration in both you and your co-workers.
- ◆ Know where the closest water station is at your worksite.
- ◆ Make it a habit to drink, check, and refill your water supply as needed.