Health, Safety & Wellness, Human Resources
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Summer Safety

Summer is a great time for enjoying water sports, grilling, picnics, and other fun activities, but it also brings some health and safety risks.

Understanding safety information that applies to summer will help prevent injuries ultimately making your summer the best, and safest, one yet!

Physical Activity During the Summer

It is easy to get caught up in the activity/job and forget about the importance of staying hydrated and taking regular breaks. Heat illnesses can occur and if the victim isn't treated quickly, the situation can become life threatening. Watch out for signs of heat illness in yourself and others, and respond accordingly.

Heat edema – Swelling which generally occurs among people who are not acclimatized to activities in hot conditions. Swelling is often noticeable in the ankles. Recovery occurs after a day or two in a cool environment.

Heat rashes – Tiny red spots on the skin which cause a prickling sensation during heat exposure. The spots are the result of inflammation caused when the ducts of sweat glands become plugged.

Heat cramps – Painful spasms of the muscles. The spasms are caused by the failure of the body to replace lost body salts and usually occur after heavy sweating.

Heat exhaustion – Is caused by loss of body water and salt through excessive sweating. Signs and symptoms of heat exhaustion include: heavy sweating, weakness, dizziness, visual disturbances, thirst, nausea, headache, vomiting. Recovery occurs after resting in a cool area and consuming cool salted drinks.

Heat stroke and hyperpyrexia (Elevated Body Temp) – This is the most serious type of heat illnesses and requires immediate medical attention. Signs of heat stroke include a body temperature often greater than 41°C, and complete or partial loss of consciousness. The signs of heat hyperpyrexia are similar except the skin remains moist. Sweating is not a good symptom of heat stress as there are two types of heat stroke.

- **Classical –** little or no sweating usually occurs in children, persons who are chronically ill, and the elderly.
- **Exertional –** body temperature rises because of strenuous exercise or work and sweating is usually present.

How to Prevent Heat Related Illnesses

1. **Stay hydrated**
   On a hot day, a person involved in an activity outside loses water and salt through sweat. This loss should be compensated by water intake equal to the fluid loss. Individuals are encouraged to rehydrate every 15-20 minutes even if they do not feel thirsty.
2. **Wear light, loose fitting clothing**
   Wear light coloured, loose fitting clothing that permits sweat evaporation but stops radiant heat. Tightly woven clothing that you cannot see through is best.
3. **Protect yourself**
   Use sunscreen with a sun protection factor of at least 15 to block 93% of UV rays. Wearing UV absorbent sunglasses should block 99% of UVA and UVB rays. Also, wear a hat and use screens or umbrellas to create shaded areas.
4. **Use fans or air conditioning**
   Ventilation and localized air conditioning units are a couple of methods commonly used to provide a more comfortable atmosphere.
5. **Allow flexibility**
   Make sure to take regular, frequent breaks and permit less physically demanding activities during peak temperature periods. Rest periods in a cooler area can easily prevent or reduce heat-related illnesses.
6. **Vehicles**
   Do **not** leave children or pets unattended in automobiles – even for a few minutes. Temperatures inside automobiles can quickly exceed 130 degrees. Children and pets can die in just a few minutes in high temperatures.

When Thunder Roars -- Go Indoors!

Every year in Canada, lightning can cause as many as 10 deaths and 164 injuries. You can avoid a tragedy like this by taking a few simple precautions.

If you can hear thunder, you can get hit by lightning. Take shelter immediately. If you cannot find a sturdy, fully enclosed building with wiring and plumbing, get into a metal-roofed vehicle. Stay inside for 30 minutes after the last rumble of thunder.

Avoid the Threat of Lightning

- **Plan for a safe day, check the weather forecast first.** If thunderstorms are forecast, avoid being outdoors at that time or make an alternate plan. Identify safe places and determine how long it will take you to reach them.
- **Watch the skies for developing thunderstorms and listen for thunder.** As soon as you hear thunder, quickly get to a safe location. If you can hear thunder, you are in danger of being hit by lightning. More people are struck before and after a thunderstorm than during one.
- **Get to a safe place.** A safe location is a fully enclosed building with wiring and plumbing. Sheds, picnic shelters, tents or covered porches do NOT protect you from lightning. If no sturdy building is close by, get into a metal-roofed vehicle and close all the windows.
- **Do not handle electrical equipment, telephones or plumbing.** These are all electrical conductors. Using a computer or wired video game system, taking a bath or touching a metal window frame all put you at risk of being struck by lightning. Use battery-operated appliances only.
- **If on water, get to shore as quickly as possible.** The high waves and strong gusts of wind associated with sudden fast-moving storms can make it difficult for swimmers, boaters and water skiers to reach shore safely. Lightning that hits water travels well beyond its point of contact. Small boats with no cabin provide less protection than boats with enclosed cabins.
- **If caught outdoors far from shelter, stay away from tall objects.** This includes trees, poles, wires and fences. Take shelter in a low-lying area but be on the alert for possible flooding.
- **Download:** **Environment Canada Weather App**

Mosquito Borne Diseases

The summer months increase the potential of infection from viruses carried by mosquitoes. The five **D's** of protection include:

Dusk and **D**awn (when mosquitoes are most active) - avoid unprotected outdoor activity;
DEET repellents – use as directed by the manufacturer;
Dress to cover skin with long sleeve shirts and pants; and,
Drain potential mosquito breeding sites (fountains/containers that hold water) from around your house.

Water Safety

Drowning continues to be one of the leading causes of death during the summer for children. It takes less than five minutes for a child to drown or suffer permanent brain damage. Although water recreation provides hours of enjoyment and exercise for the whole family, water and children can be a deadly mix when there is an unsafe environment and inadequate supervision.

Be a "Water Watcher"

Never leave a child unattended near water, even for a moment. Always supervise young children playing in or near a body of water. An adult should be within arm's reach of a child in or near a pool, lake, or body of water. Take the child with you if you must attend to another chore.
Designate an adult at social gatherings to watch over the pool.

Barriers

Place barriers between a child and the water. Fence a pool on all four sides with pool fencing that is at least four feet high. Fences should have self-closing and self-latching gates. Move items that can be climbed on (chairs and tables) away from the pool area in an effort to prevent unattended children from entering the pool area. Use child-resistant locks and/or alarms on all doors and windows, installed out of reach of children.

Life preservers and personal floatation devices

In Canada, hundreds of people drown while boating every year. Over 87% were not wearing a life jacket or personal floatation device when they drowned. [Canadian Red Cross]
WEAR your lifejacket or personal floatation device and make every boating outing a return trip.

Be prepared for an emergency

Keep rescue equipment, including reaching and throwing aids, nearby and in good condition.
Always search the pool or body of water first when looking for children. Those who have a pool, and caregivers, should be certified in CPR for children. CPR and rescue instructions should be placed in a visible location near the pool. Keep a cordless or cell phone poolside.

Teach children water safety skills

Ensure children are educated about being safe around water.

Food Protection

Always wash your hands with warm, soapy water before and after handling food and between handling raw and cooked foods. Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold. With the increasing heat of the summer months, bacterial growth in food can be rapid.

Bike Safety

Falls are the number one cause of injury involving bicycles in Saskatchewan yet the majority of these injuries are preventable. Following safe practices as well as increased awareness will help prevent injuries from occurring.

Helmet

Always wear a CSA approved helmet!

Properly fitted bicycle

Riders should be able to stand flat-footed over the bike with at least one inch of clearance above the top bar

Inspection

Ensure an inspection is completed on your bike each season of riding. Things to look at are the brakes, wheels, bearings, frame, handlebars, tires, chain, gears and accessories.

Other safety equipment

Bell, horn, reflectors and rear and front lights for night riding.

Look both ways

Arriving at the street from driveways, parking lots and sidewalks, a cyclist may not stop and watch for traffic. Not doing so is a frequent cause of car-bike collisions involving children.
Always yield to oncoming traffic, and look both ways before entering a street.

Traffic

Riding a bike and facing traffic or riding on the wrong side of a street is among the most hazardous cycling practices. This increases the chance of a collision with a motor vehicle. Remember -- a bike is a vehicle! Motorists must respect a cyclist and share the road. ***Always*** ride on the right side of the road.

Inexperienced cyclist

Young or inexperienced cyclists may turn or swerve without warning into the paths of cars travelling in the same or opposite direction. When you are learning to ride a bike, stay off of busy streets.

Sidewalk

Riding a bike on the sidewalk is a common cause of cyclist injury. When a cyclist rides on the sidewalk, every driveway becomes an intersection. Motorists do not expect to encounter vehicle traffic coming from the sidewalks; cyclists can also be obscured by bushes, hedges or fences.
If a child is going to be riding on a sidewalk, ensure constant parental supervision and yield at every street and driveway.

[Cyclist Information provided by Skprevention.ca]