

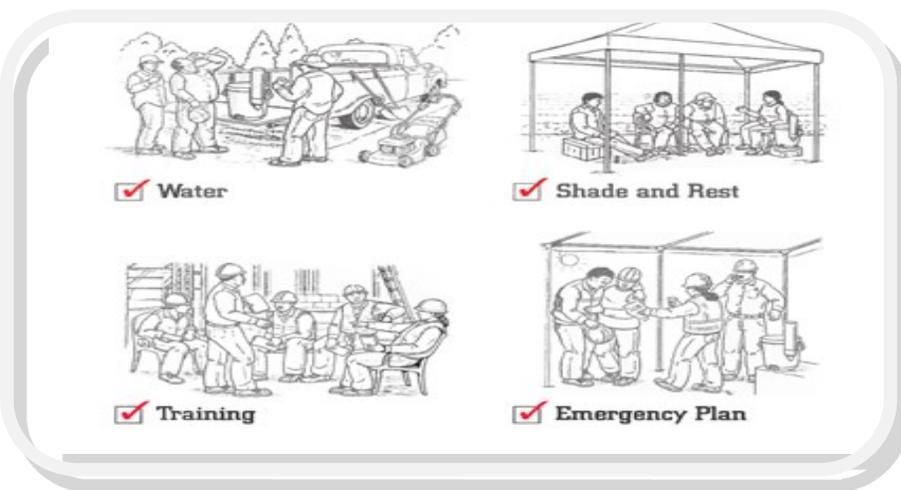
The AZSWANA Safety Minute



Safety First: The **Heat** Is On

June 2017 – Working in Summer Weather Conditions

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The solid waste and recycling industry requires us to work in all weather conditions including those that can create a potential for serious injury. Knowing the signs of heat related injury and acting quickly can prevent serious illness and may even save lives.

As an industry, we work very hard to protect our employees from injuries. Our focus on safety has increased dramatically over the years. Today, we have safety training and educational programs on a wide variety of safety subjects including the operation of heavy equipment, working around machinery and driving vehicles. Protecting workers from Mother Nature is also important—especially weather conditions such as freezing temperatures, lightning strikes and extreme heat.

As summer approaches and temperatures rise, managers and supervisors should remind workers that injury due to heat is a serious and potentially fatal work hazard. Taking steps to prevent heat related injury is very important because workers perform their jobs in hot and humid conditions.

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Six Things Solid Waste Employees Can Do To Beat the Heat:

- **Stay Hydrated.** Drivers should be drinking 5 to 7 ounces of water every 15 to 20 minutes to stay hydrated. The Center for Disease Control says when workers refrain from drinking until they “feel thirsty,” it is often too late. Sports drinks, such as Gatorade or Powerade, may also help by replacing salt and electrolytes lost by the body on hot days. Sugary drinks and sodas should be avoided.
- **Dress for Success.** Wearing light-weight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing helps keep the body cooler. A hat and sunscreen will help, too, as protection against a sunburn. A sunburn could interrupt the body’s attempts to cool down on hot days.
- **Keep Cool.** It is important to stop all activity when feeling faint or weak. Use a fan and take occasional breaks, preferably in the shade. Rest in the shade or in an air-conditioned building to cool down.
- **Know the Signs.** Indications of heat-related fatigue include confusion, loss of consciousness and seizures. Other signs of heat stress are cramping, dizziness, hot dry skin and rapid, shallow breathing.
- **Teamwork.** Keep an eye on coworkers, especially those new to working in high temperatures. Again, know the signs of heat-related illnesses, like heat stroke.
- **Easy Does It.** Pace yourself and gradually increase activity on your first days of work in the heat. Get your body used to working in high temperatures.

Visit www.osha.gov/heat to get more information on heat related injuries and how to stay safe when the heat is on.



Brought to you on behalf of the AZSWANA Safety Committee

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Torrance has over 16 years’ of experience in the solid waste industry. He is also a member of the AZSWANA Safety Committee..