

NRMCA Monthly Safety Initiative

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THE HEAT'S ON



Heat-Related Illness

Now that we are well into summer, ready mixed concrete producers must pay extra attention to prevent illnesses, and even death, due to heat exposure. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the weather event resulting in the most illnesses and deaths is heat. Mixer drivers, yardmen, loader operators and others are at risk, especially individuals with underlying health issues, and those struggling with weight. Heat stroke, heat exhaustion, heat cramps, heat rash and even sunburns are all classified as heat-related illnesses. Common symptoms can include sweating, pale skin, muscle cramps, fatigue or weakness, headache or dizziness, fever, nausea, increased breathing, and/or unresponsiveness.



Heat Safety Recommendations

The easiest ways for preventing heat illness, according to ready mixed concrete safety professionals, are to hydrate, rest and seek shade. Other options include using appropriate clothing choices (light-colors, loose-fitting, short sleeves), scheduling activities during cooler times (night pours), pacing work and taking frequent breaks, sunscreen use, and avoiding heavy meals. As well, monitoring daily weather will help keep workers informed to make the right decisions. Mixer drivers and others should also be on the lookout for heat-related illness symptoms from coworkers. If a worker is experiencing increased heart rate, increased breathing attempt to have the individual hydrate, move the worker to a cool place, remove heavy/hot clothing – including any masks that may be worn as a COVID-19 precaution. If worker symptoms do not improve, immediately call 911.

Actions

Quick considerations for heat safety practices:

- Think first
- Have a plan
- Know heat-related illness symptoms
- Hydrate
- Rest
- Seek medical attention

Resources

For more information on heat safety please follow the links below.

OSHA: [Heat Illness Prevention Campaign – Water. Rest. Shade.](#)

OSHA-NIOSH: [Heat Safety Tool](#) (app-based)

CDC: [Tips for Preventing Heat-Related Illness](#)

CDC-NIOSH: [Prevent Heat-Related Illness](#) (poster)



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