

CRAFTSMAN CRIBSHEET

How to Beat the Heat

By David Wynn, Director of Technical Services, PMPA

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July is that time of year when working in a shop can become a *little* warm. Tasks become more difficult just because of the heat. Even when a shop is air conditioned, it is noticeably more humid and uncomfortable during the “dog days of summer.” Here are three P’s to beat the heat:

Prioritize

Know the risk factors for heat-related illness. Early-stage heat exhaustion is easily treatable, but having a heat stroke could put a person out of work for several weeks. It sounds gross, but a leading indicator to heat exhaustion is urine color. Urine needs to be a clear to slightly yellow color. If it is getting dark, a person is not consuming enough fluids. Look for other signs like muscle cramps, headaches, and dizziness. If a person is experiencing any of these symptoms, it is time to take a break and get fluids in their system. Sit in front of a fan or in an air-conditioned space for a 10 - 15 minute break to cool off and be sure water and electrolytes are consumed.



Protect

When working in summer heat, protection is key. Good air circulation helps use the body’s natural cooling system — our sweat. We perspire and the evaporation of that moisture cools our body. Fans are a fantastic way to circulate the air. Moving air feels cooler because of this natural evaporation cooling system. Wear moisture wicking materials to help keep cool. Several brands now have the fast-drying shirts, shorts, socks and other gear which makes beating the heat easier.

Cooling towels work great as well. Wet them with water and rest it on your neck. All the blood in a person’s body flows through their neck approximately once every five minutes. Cooling this area can help cool the whole body.

Prevent

During these hot days, prevention is key. Get eight hours of rest after work. Take time to cool off after work while resting. Being in the heat all day is exhausting and the body needs time to recover. Just like working hard at the gym, working hard at work needs recovery time.

Make sure to maintain fluid intake even when a person is resting. Stay away from dehydrating drinks such as soft drinks, alcohol, and highly caffeinated beverages (think tea and coffee). Drinking too much of these will cause the body to expend fluids rather than retain them. In the cool of the morning, drink three to four cups of water. If possible, skip the coffee (I get it, I would not be skipping mine either.) If coffee is a necessity, then make sure to drink enough water to offset its dehydrating properties.

Filling up on water early in the morning (or before shift if work starts another time) helps us to start the day hydrated, and keeps us from playing catch up all day.

I know it is hot out there, but we are doing important work in our shops. Keep up the good work and stay cool and healthy. The economic engine of the United States depends on our precision machined parts. **P**