NUMBER 25.0 – Heat Stress Prevention Program

1.0 PURPOSE:

To minimize the risk of an accident or injury caused by heat stress, to protect employees from hazards of high heat conditions, and to comply with NIOSSH guidelines related to heat stress.

2.0 POLICY:

Signature will provide engineering controls and administrative controls to reduce the effects of high heat conditions.

3.0 RESPONSIBILITIES:

A. It is the responsibility of the **Facility Leader** to ensure compliance with this procedure in its entirety.
B. It is the responsibility of **All Employees** to follow the requirements of this procedure.

4.0 PROCEDURE:

A. All employees will be trained annually on heat illness and heat stress. Such training will be performed during a weekly safety meeting. Training will include awareness on heat illness, heat stroke, heat exhaustion, heat cramps, etc. and preventative measures.

B. Access to drinking water will be provided at each facility. This will be accomplished by a drinking fountain or water station. During times of prolonged heat, employees will be encouraged to drink water periodically including during their break and lunch period. An employee working in a high heat environment will be encouraged to drink, eight ounces of fresh water every 15 minutes during high heat periods.

C. For employees working outside, Signature will provide access to shade or a cool area out of the sun for rest/recovery periods. When possible, schedule heavy work during the coolest part of the day.

D. Within the facility, oscillating fans will be permanently mounted to provide adequate ventilation and air movement during times of prolonged heat. This does not mean that every employee and/or every workstation will have a fan rather the workplace will be evaluated to ensure that “hot spots” are vented and mitigated.

E. Factors leading to heat stress: High temperature and humidity; direct sun or heat; limited air movement; physical exertion; poor physical condition; some medicines; and inadequate tolerance for hot workplaces. One method of monitoring hydration levels is the attached Self-Hydration Urine Guide. Facilities must post the Self-Hydration Urine Guide in all restrooms.

F. Early recognition of heat stress in yourself and your coworkers is vitally important to avoid or minimize its effects. Appropriate first aid to the severity of the heat stress is critical. The Heat Stress Symptom and Definition Chart (see attached) should be posted in first aid rooms, break areas, bulletin boards and at water coolers, as a quick reference guide.

G. Employees failing to comply with this procedure will be disciplined in accordance with normal progressive disciplinary procedures for the facility.

5.0 ATTACHMENT / FORMS:

A. Heat Stress Symptom and Definition Chart
B. Self-Hydration Urine Guide

6.0 PROCEDURE HISTORY:

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NUMBER 25.0 – Heat Stress Symptom and Definition Chart

ATTACHMENT A - HEAT STRESS SYMPTOM AND DEFINITION CHART

What is heat stress?

When the body is unable to cool itself by sweating, several heat-induced illnesses such as heat cramps, heat exhaustion and the more severe heat stroke can occur.

What kind of heat disorders can occur?

Heat stroke *is the most serious disorder associated with heat stress. It occurs when the body's temperature regulation fails, and body temperature rises to critical levels. It is a medical emergency that can lead to death.*

Heat exhaustion *is a result of the combination of excessive heat and dehydration. Untreated, heat exhaustion can lead to heat stroke.*

Heat cramps *are usually the result of hard physical labor in a hot environment, often resulting from an imbalance of electrolytes in the body.*

Heat rashes *are a common problem resulting from persistent wetting of clothing by unevaporated sweat.*

How am I exposed?

Any process or job site that is likely to raise the worker's deep core temperature raises the risk of heat stress. Operations involving high air temperatures, radiant heat sources, high humidity, direct physical contact with hot objects, or strenuous physical activities have a high potential for inducing heat stress in employees. In addition, age, weight, degree of physical fitness and acclimatization, dehydration, metabolism, use of alcohol or medications, and a variety of medical conditions all affect a person's sensitivity to heat.

What can I do to prevent heat-related conditions?

Heat-related conditions can be prevented, or its effects minimized:

- *Acclimatization (Short work exposure early in the hot season, followed by gradual increases in intensity and duration.)*
- *Frequent work breaks an area that is cooler than the work environment.*
- *Drink plenty of water or non-caffeinated beverages.*
- *Wear light-colored, loose-fitting clothing.*
- *Avoid all alcohol and caffeine.*

USING YOUR URINE AS A GUIDE TO SELF-HYDRATION

Dark Yellow / Orange

Dangerously low hydration level

Dark Yellow

Very low hydration level

Yellow

Low hydration level

Light Yellow

Adequate hydration level

Clear

Good hydration level