



June 18 — Looking Out for Each Other

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| Heat stress, dehydration due to severe heat working on the ovens | Make sure everyone is drinking plenty of water, and take a break from the heat every once in a while |
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Heat stress doesn't always start with a medical emergency. More often, it starts with small warning signs that are easy to overlook. A little more fatigue than normal. A headache. Slower movements.

A coworker who suddenly seems quieter than usual.

An employee observed the potential for heat stress and dehydration while employees were working around the ovens in extremely hot conditions. Recognizing the risk, he reminded the crew to drink plenty of water and take breaks from the heat throughout the day.

It may seem like a simple reminder, but heat-related illnesses often develop gradually. As temperatures rise and physical demands increase, the body works harder to cool itself. If fluids aren't replaced and employees don't have opportunities to cool down, heat exhaustion and heat stroke can develop quickly.

One of the challenges with heat stress is that employees often focus on finishing the task rather than paying attention to how they feel. When production is busy or work is physically demanding, it's easy to delay a water break or tell yourself you'll cool off later. Unfortunately, heat stress doesn't wait for a convenient time.

That's why looking out for one another is so important. Sometimes a coworker notices the warning signs before we do. A simple reminder to drink water, step into the shade, or take a break can prevent a minor issue from becoming a serious medical event.

In this case, the employee recognized the conditions, spoke up, and encouraged the team to take steps to protect themselves before anyone became ill.

Hazards

- Heat exhaustion
- Heat stroke
- Dehydration
- Fatigue
- Reduced concentration
- Increased risk of mistakes and injuries

Words of Wisdom

Heat stress prevention starts long before someone feels sick. Staying hydrated, taking breaks, and watching out for coworkers are some of the most effective tools we have.

Pause and Think

- What are the early warning signs of heat stress?
- How much water do you typically drink during a hot workday?
- Have you ever seen a coworker showing signs of heat stress before they noticed it themselves?
- What factors make it difficult for employees to take breaks when working in hot conditions?
- How can crews encourage one another to stay hydrated and cool throughout the day?

Closing Thought

Sometimes the best safety intervention is a simple reminder: drink some water and take a break.