TOPIC: Working in hot weather and hot environments

Heat stress can lead to heat exhaustion, heat stroke or even death.

Symptoms:
- nausea, headache, vomiting
- cramping in arms, legs, abdomen
- weakness, dizziness
- breathing difficulties
- chills
- rapid heart beat

What should you do when you notice the onset of symptoms of heat stress:
- never hesitate to rest
- seek shade or air conditioning to cool down
- increase fluid intake

Things you can do to prevent heat stress for yourself and other members of the crew:
- review the first aid training and be sure that everyone on the crew knows how to recognize the signs, symptoms and treatment for heat stress
- know when the temperature and humidity reach hazardous levels – and communicate the dangers to others
- always keep fluids on site and encourage consumption
- watch others for signs of heat stress

Two serious problems:
Heat Exhaustion symptoms are heavy sweating, headache, light-headedness or, nausea/vomiting, and is caused by dehydration plus salt depletion.
What to do: move to shade or air conditioning, give fluids, seek medical attention.

Heat Stroke can begin as heat exhaustion and will progress if not treated. Symptoms include elevated temperature and
as the heat stress gets worse, there may be an absence of sweating. If immediate care is not provided, it can result in brain damage, kidney failure, liver failure, or blood clotting abnormalities.

What to do: Lower the body temperature as fast as possible, remove clothing, use cool water with fanning to increase evaporation. If ice is available, place Ice packs in armpits, behind neck and in groin area. Requires immediate medical attention.

Review Questions to ask the crew:

1. How do you know if you have symptoms of heat stress? How do you feel when you are suffering from heat stress?
   - nausea; headache; vomiting; cramping in arms, legs, abdomen; weakness or dizziness; breathing difficulties; chills or rapid heart beat

2. What should you do if you are suffering from heat stress?
   - never hesitate to rest; seek shade or air conditioning to cool down;
   - increase fluid intake

3. It’s a hot, humid day: one of the crew members seems dizzy and then passes out – what should you do?
   - lower the body temperature as fast as possible; remove clothing; use cool water with fanning to increase evaporation; if ice is available, place Ice packs in armpits, behind neck and in groin area. Get immediate medical attention

4. What is the best way to summon medical help when we are on the job?
   - call 9-1-1