

101 CRITICAL DAYS OF SUMMER 2014

Risk management has a role in everything we do, both on and off duty. It continues to be the job of the safety professionals to provide guidance to all Airmen about the dangers of the season. Airmen use sound risk management every day on duty and, while the main focus of the Critical Days of Summer campaign is off duty activities, Airmen must use the same risk management techniques in all circumstances.

*Chapter 10
July 25, 2014*



101 CRITICAL DAYS OF SUMMER



Chapter 10: Some Like It Hot

Topic: Heat Illness Prevention

Being outdoors can be the best part of the summer season. “Fun in the Sun” is what many look forward to. Who hasn’t worked up a lather of sweat participating in all that the outdoors has to offer? It’s hard to imagine that you can actually die from something as simple as getting overheated. The CDC reports there are approximately 618 heat-related deaths each year in the United States; 68 percent of which are men (based on statistics from 1999-2010).

Whether your job keeps you outside or you’re outside for leisure, you are at risk of a heat illness, especially those doing heavy work tasks or using bulky protective clothing and equipment. The Air Force refers to heat-related illness as thermal injury; reference AFI91-203, 3.1.2.10 for information.

Heat illness dangers are the same regardless of your activity and can be easily mitigated when risk management steps are applied. This begins with knowing the temperature outside; how long you’ll be outside; and what personal protective gear you’ll need. Follow through with steps 2-5 of the risk management model (see Chapter 3) to address your risk.

Heat illnesses happen when your body is unable to cool itself and your temperature rises. Heat illnesses range from heat rash and heat cramps to heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Heat stroke requires **immediate medical attention** and can result in **death**.

These are some of the ways to prevent heat illness:

- Drink water every 15 minutes, even if you’re not thirsty.
- Rest in the shade to cool down.
- Wear a hat and light-colored clothing.
- Learn the signs of heat illness and what to do in an emergency.
- Keep an eye on everyone with you.

Remember these three simple words: Water, Rest, Shade. Taking these precautions can mean the difference between life and death.

Resources about heat illness include:

<https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/heatillness/index.html#affected>

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/heatstress/>

<https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/heatillness/index.html>

<https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/heatillness/map.html>

<http://www.nws.noaa.gov/os/heat/index.shtml>

