

BOX 14-12A PROTECTING WORKERS FROM HEAT STRESS*

Symptoms of heat stress are loss of concentration; increased heart rate, body temperature, and irritability; fatigue; headache; little desire to drink; fainting; and possible death if not removed from the situation causing heat stress.

Ways to reduce the risk of heat stress:

- Provide cool water in close proximity and encourage workers to drink often (1-2 quarts per hour)
- Provide rest breaks and access to shade when temperatures are above 100°F, humidity is unusually high, or environmental conditions warrant concern (as indicated by the Air Quality Index)
- Stay alert for early symptoms of excessive exposure to heat in workers
- Train supervisors and first aid workers to recognize heat stress disorders
- Ensure proper provisions and communication systems are in place to contact medical assistance to avoid unnecessary delay of treatment
- Encourage workers to wear appropriate clothing (cotton garments) and to use sunscreen, hats, and sunglasses
- Be aware that workers who are obese, pregnant, older, or taking certain medications are at greater risk for heat stress.

Source: Adapted from the *Agricultural Safety and Health Inspection Project (ASHIP)*, California Department of Industrial Relations, Division of Occupational Safety and Health, Sacramento.

*For additional information, see the California Code of Regulations Heat Illness Prevention Standard (<http://www.dir.ca.gov/Title8/3395.html>), the Cal/OSHA Farm Labor Contractor Safety and Health Guide – Section 5 (http://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/dosh_publications/flc_eng.pdf), the US Department of Labor Fact Sheet (http://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_table=FACT_SHEETS&p_id=167), and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) booklet *Working in Hot Environments* (<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/hotenvt.html>). Free heat stress prevention pocket cards in English and Spanish are available at http://www.cawg.org/pdf/Heat%20Stress_FINAL.pdf (produced by California agricultural trade associations and the UC Berkeley College of Natural Resources with funding from the US Department of Agriculture through the Western Center for Risk Management Education).