

MARCH 09

Susceptibility to heat problems

Summer is fast approaching and with it comes heat!

Auxiliary crews that are not accustomed to strenuous physical activity in hot and humid environments are particularly susceptible to heat injury. Heat exhaustion typically occurs when crews exercise heavily during hot and humid days leading to heavy sweating. Working without cover for long periods is also a contributing factor. Fluid loss can result in a decreased blood flow to vital organs. In heat exhaustion sweat does not evaporate as it should, possibly because of high humidity. As a result the body is not cooled effectively.

Coxswains will want to ask the physical status of their crew during pre-ops meeting. Being curious about medications or muscle aches is OK. Providing each crew person with an (inked initials) starter bottle of water and agreeing to consumption requirements prior to GAR Modeling is a good idea. Humidity levels forecast for the day are as important as tide information!

Symptoms, of heat exhaustion are insidious at first and then very quick to strike. Some confusion may surface doing normal repetitive functions. At times spots or floaters impair the vision (shooters eye) and the victim tries to clear their site and/or clean glasses. Profuse sweating will be evidenced. Respiration may be increased (rapid/hard heartbeats,) nausea and headache may be symptoms. Suddenly collapsing (fainting) can/may occur.

Should a faint happen to a crew person, first aid treatment is to be provided to begin cooling the collapsed crew. Notification to the Order Issuing Authority providing radio guard is to be immediately completed. Removal of the patient to a location that can provide medical care is SOP.

With our personal attention to the hydration needs of our physical machine (body) we should enjoy the hot operations season comfortably. Just keep tipping that water bottle!!!! Coxswains remember to provide rest periods for "Cool Down."