To: NMSU Employees (Staff, Supervisors, Faculty and Researchers)

Subject: Heat Illness Prevention

It’s summer and with the increasing summer heat, it is important to review the precautions to prevent heat related illnesses, which occur when the body is unable to cool itself efficiently. Heat illness is a serious medical condition that can lead to death if the body’s core temperature is not cooled down promptly.

Heat illnesses includes: heat cramps, heat rash, heat exhaustion and heat stroke. The risks are particularly high for individuals who work outdoors. Certain personal factors such as chronic health conditions, age, prescription medications, etc. can also inhibit the body’s ability to cool itself during warm weather.

Employees should know the illness symptoms and prevention methods when working outside

1. **Heat Illness Symptoms**
   - **Early Symptoms**
     - Fatigue
     - Heavy sweating
     - Headache
     - Cramps
     - Dizziness
     - High pulse rate
     - Nausea or vomiting
   - **Life-threatening Symptoms**
     - High body temperature
     - Red, hot, and dry skin
     - Confusion
     - Convulsions
     - Fainting

2. **Heat Illness Prevention Measures**
   - Drink water frequently (every 15 minutes). Drink one quart (4 cups) of water per hour while in the heat. Don’t wait until you get thirsty. Do not drink alcohol, coffee, or soft drinks.
   - Wear light-weight/loose-fitting clothing. Include bandana; UV-absorbent sunglasses; and a wide brimmed hat or cap.
   - Take frequent breaks. Five (5) minute breaks in the cool shade or inside an air-conditioned building will allow the body to recover quickly from heat stress.
   - Wear sunscreen. A sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15 blocks 93% of UVB rays.
   - Be mindful of medication side effects. Ask your health care provider or pharmacist if there are any adverse effects to being in the sun/heat while on prescription medication.

If you, your staff or researchers work outdoors or are exposed to the heat for extended periods, please print, review and distribute/post the following resources from the EHS website:

- “It Hot Outside” - CDC Extreme Heat Brochure
- “Water Rest Shade” - OSHA Heat Safety Fact Sheet

Posters have been placed in several facilities on main campus, and are available on the safety.nmsu.edu (above links). Supervisors are expected to ensure water availability, shade & rest breaks, understanding of the illness hazards and symptoms, and the emergency plan (what to do in a heat illness emergency).

Please contact Environment, Health & Safety with any questions or concerns.

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