

## Heat Illness Prevention

### Dangers of Working in the Heat:

Every year, dozens of workers die and thousands more become ill while working in extreme heat or humid conditions. There are a range of heat illnesses and they can affect anyone, regardless of age or physical condition. If you are a parish school or church employee/volunteer who works outdoors frequently in the summer this newsletter is for you.

### Signs of Heat Exhaustion:

Heat exhaustion can include any of the following; confusion, dizziness, fainting, fatigue, headache, muscle cramps, nausea, and a rapid heartbeat. Left untreated, heat exhaustion can lead to heatstroke which is a life threatening condition. If you suspect heat exhaustion take these steps immediately:



- Move the person out of the heat and into a shady or air-conditioned area.
- Lay the person down and elevate the legs and feet slightly.
- Remove tight or heavy clothing.
- Have the person drink cool water or other beverage without caffeine or alcohol.
- Cool the person with a damp sponge or water spray and fanning.

### Prevention Steps:

You can take a number of precautions to prevent heat exhaustion and other heat-related illnesses.

- Wear loose-fitting, lightweight, light-colored clothing. Dark or tight clothing holds in heat and doesn't let your body cool properly because it inhibits sweat evaporation.
- Avoid sunburn. Sunburn reduces your body's ability to rid itself of heat. If you're outdoors, wear a light wide-brimmed hat or use an umbrella to protect yourself from the sun. Apply sunscreen to exposed skin.
- Drink plenty of fluids. Staying hydrated will help your body sweat and maintain a normal body temperature.
- If the summer work schedule allows try to perform physically demanding work in the mornings.
- Take extra precautions with certain medications. Ask your doctor or pharmacist whether the medications you take make you more susceptible to heat illness and if so what you can do to keep from overheating.