

Why Hydration Matters

Water is essential for your body to function properly. Even mild dehydration can affect concentration, reaction time, energy levels, and physical performance. For employees working outdoors, in hot environments, operating equipment, driving, or performing physical labor, dehydration can quickly become a serious safety concern.

Signs of Dehydration – Watch for:

- Reduced sweating
- Dark yellow urine
- Muscle cramps
- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- Dry mouth
- Headache
- Fatigue
- Thirst

Heat Illness Warning Signs – If dehydration progresses, it can lead to heat-related illness.

- **Heat Exhaustion Symptoms:** Heavy sweating, weakness, nausea, headache, dizziness and cool, clammy skin.
- **Heat Stroke Symptoms (*Medical Emergency*):** Confusion, loss of consciousness, seizures, hot, dry skin or excessive sweating and Body temperature above 103°F. ***Call emergency services immediately*** if heat stroke is suspected.

How Much Water Should You Drink? There is no single amount that fits everyone, but a good guideline is:

- **Most adults:** About **8–12 cups** of fluids per day under normal conditions.

Hydration Recommendations for Hot Weather Work Outdoors

- Drink **8 ounces of water every 15–20 minutes** when working in hot conditions depending on temperature, humidity, workload, and individual factors.
- Take regular rest breaks in shaded or cool areas.
- Replace electrolytes during prolonged sweating or work lasting several hours. You lose salt and other electrolytes when you sweat. Substantial loss of electrolytes can cause muscle cramps and other dangerous health problems.

Can You Drink Too Much Water? Yes. While uncommon, drinking excessive amounts of water in a short period can dilute the body's sodium levels and lead to a serious condition called **hyponatremia**.

Quick Hydration Check – One of the easiest ways to monitor hydration is urine color:

- Pale yellow: Well hydrated
- Dark yellow or amber: Drink more fluids
- Very dark urine or infrequent urination: Possible dehydration

**Hydration Tips for Everyone**

Hydration isn't just important for field employees. Office staff, drivers, mechanics, and supervisors can also become dehydrated, especially during warm weather, travel, or long periods of activity. Everyone should:

- ***Don't wait until you're thirsty.*** Thirst is often a sign that dehydration has already begun.
- Keep a water bottle nearby and drink water throughout the day.
- Limit excessive caffeine and sugary beverages.
- Pay attention to signs of dehydration.
- Avoid alcohol the day before working in excessive heat: Remember that hydration starts the night before.
- Drink enough water/electrolyte supplement to prevent thirst. If you're thirsty, you may have already lost about 2% of your body's fluids and it's time to replenish.



Toolbox Talk Attendance Form

Supervisor / Project Manager: _____ **Date:** _____

PRINT NAME	SIGNATURE