



Preventing Heat-Related Illness

For Pacific Crest Trail Association, volunteer safety is a top priority. In addition to California, Washington State recently enacted legislation related to heat stress to protect outdoor workers. Because much of our volunteer work is outdoors on the trail, heat-related illnesses are conditions that all PCTA volunteer leaders should be aware of.

Take steps now to protect yourself and be aware of ways to reduce the risk of heat exposure:

1. Wear double-layer woven clothing which will allow air to reach the skin. Avoid “vapor barrier clothing” which inhibits and prevents sweat from evaporating into the air. Such clothing includes: chemical resistant suits, encapsulating suits, and other forms of non-breathing clothing.
2. Drink water; at least one quart of drinking water per worker per hour, while exposed to regular summer temperature (74 degrees or above).
3. Be aware of working conditions that will increase the risk of heat-related illness. This could include air temperature, relative humidity, radiant heat from the sun and other sources, conductive heat sources such as the ground, work load, duration of work, and personal protection equipment worn by employees/volunteers.
4. Be aware of personal conditions that will increase the risk of a heat-related illness, such as, age, degree of acclimatization, medical conditions, insufficient water consumption, alcohol consumed, caffeine use, nicotine use, and use of medications that affect the body’s responses to heat.

Anyone who appears to have the symptoms of a heat related illness (such as: painful muscle spasms, fainting, blurred vision, fatigue, pale and clammy skin, nausea, red face, convulsions, confusion or erratic behavior) must be relieved from work and provided with sufficient ways to reduce their body temperature, including taking them out of direct sunlight and giving them plenty of fluids.

If symptoms do not improve within a matter of minutes, seek immediate professional medical attention.

A free heat safety card from Washington State Department of Labor & Industries is available at <http://www.lni.wa.gov/IPUB/417-218-909.pdf>



Pacific Crest Trail Association
1331 Garden Highway · Sacramento, CA 95833
(916) 285-1846 (Phone) · (916) 285-1865 (Fax) · www.pcta.org