



# Tractor Talks

## Heat Exposure

### Tips for Talking

- **Plan ahead.** Be familiar and comfortable with the topic.
- **Make it relevant.** Include related tasks and work areas or events.
- **Involve your workers.** Ask questions that lead to participation. See suggestions under "Discussion Drivers."

### What went wrong?

**August 1, 1:36 p.m.**

At 6:00 a.m. Juan Hernandez, a temporary farm laborer, began his first day of work for the largest melon producer in California. After the 56 year old worked a 6 hour shift harvesting cantaloupes in temperatures that exceeded 100° F, a co-worker observed Juan "staggering" and "stumbling." The co-worker assisted Juan and called his supervisor. Together, they transported Juan to a nearby cold storage facility and later to the local hospital's emergency room where he was pronounced dead with a core body temperature of 109.4° F. **What went wrong?**

### Heat Exposure

Working outside when weather conditions are hot makes workers vulnerable to heat exposure, especially if they are new or haven't worked for a week or more. When working in hot environments:

- **Allow time to gradually become "acclimatized."** New workers, and those who have been away for a while, need time to adjust to high temperatures. Less strenuous work, reduced work load and more breaks are necessary for the first couple of weeks.
- **Drink WATER every 15 minutes.** Your employer is required to provide drinking water.
- **Rest in the shade to cool down.** There should be somewhere workers can go to get out of the sun for breaks.
- **Wear a hat and light-colored clothing.** This will help deflect the heat. Dark colors tend to absorb the heat, leading to a greater risk of exposure.
- **Keep an eye on yourself and fellow workers.** Know the signs of heat illness and what to do in an emergency (see below). Report any symptoms as soon as they are noticed.
- **Know your risk.** Some health conditions can put workers at greater risk of heat-related illness. These include diabetes, kidney and heart problems, pregnancy, and being overweight.

### Symptoms and How to Respond:

	Symptoms	Response
Heat Exhaustion	Cool, moist skin, heavy sweating, headache, nausea, dizziness, thirst.	Move to shade, sit or lie down, drink cool water, notify supervisor.
Heat Stroke	Confusion, fainting, seizures, excessive sweating or dry, red, hot skin.	Call 911, move to shade, loosen clothing, provide water, apply cool water or cold packs, stay until help arrives.

### Discussion Drivers

1. How might Juan's heat-related death have been prevented?
2. Think back to a time when working in a hot environment resulted in symptoms of heat exposure. What were your symptoms? What did you do?
3. What idea(s) will help us work safely when it's hot outside?
4. What can you do to help someone who is having heat related symptoms?

There's more information on Heat Exposure and related illnesses at [OSHA.gov](http://OSHA.gov). OSHA has a free Heat Safety App for iPhone and Android.

This material was produced under grant number SH-27619-15-60-F-37 from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, U.S. Department of Labor. It does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of Labor, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.