Laborer Killed by Heat Stroke



Heavy work on a hot day caused a fatal heat stroke for a laborer at an industrial waste processing facility. From the start of his shift in the morning to the time he collapsed in the late afternoon, he had been sorting scrap material delivered from a construction site and delivering it the appropriate waste dump.

When he started to stagger, a fellow worker advised him to rest in the shade. The victim started to walk toward the site office, but suddenly crouched down and stopped moving. The co-worker tried to get his attention but he did not respond. Nor did he drink the water the other worker tried to give him. Further efforts failed to revive him and he died later in hospital.

Investigation determined the worker’s clothing was inappropriate for work in the hot sun. He was wearing a hardhat with a towel inside – not only ineffective for cooling but interfering with protection against head injury.

The employee had been on the job for five days. Investigators found he had not been consuming the water and electrolyte replacement needed for hot conditions. Nor had his fitness for this work been assessed.

Are you aware of the risk factors for heat stroke? They include high temperatures, high humidity, heavy exertion, failure to drink water frequently, poor health such as heart disease and excess body weight, and failing to take the time to adjust to hot weather work.