By now, everyone has experienced some of the effects of the summer heat in Las Vegas. As I walk around and visit with many of our CoStars, the common topic of discussion tends to be the extreme heat, and what measures can be taken to help prevent overheating and dehydration. Shortly, all CoStars who are affected by the heat as a part of their job will be asked to complete a very brief on-line training module on how to identify, prevent and treat heat exhaustion. Additionally, I would like to point out some facts regarding this subject that might be of interest to you, and helpful in preventing a potentially life-threatening situation.

There are several mechanical measures that can be taken to help cool things down. Cooling fans, misting systems, umbrellas, etc. are a few of these. However, the single most important thing we can do to help avoid a heat-related illness is to stay hydrated. Drink a lot of water. Every opportunity you get, drink some water. Dehydration can lead to severe discomfort, and ultimately result in heat stress.

It’s important to recognize that drinking beverages other than water can be more harmful than not drinking anything at all. High energy drinks can be particularly harmful in a heat-intense setting, as their sugar and caffeine causes an increase in metabolism. This requires your body to use even more water, and speeds up the chance for dehydration. Stay away from Red Bull and similar products while at work. Same for sodas and coffee, if possible. Sports drinks such as Gatorade have less sugar and caffeine, but are designed to replenish nutrients for just an hour or two. They are not intended to replace water. In fact, most athletes are directed to drink 8-10 glasses of water a day when they have no activity. This keeps them thoroughly hydrated at all times, and lessens the chance of dehydration during an actual sporting event.

When the body is unable to cool itself by sweating, heat stress can occur very quickly. If not treated immediately, heat stress can turn into heat stroke, which is very, very bad. Therefore, let’s take a look at the symptoms of each, and discuss what to do if you recognize that you, or a fellow CoStar, are exhibiting the effects of a heat related illness.

First, if you become dehydrated you may experience cramping in your larger muscles. It is at this point that you should rest for a few minutes and drink as much water as you can. Cramps are the first indication that you need more hydration.
Heat Exhaustion

- Headaches, dizziness, lightheadedness or fainting
- Cold, clammy skin
- Nausea or vomiting
- Noticeable mood changes

Heat Stroke

- Dry, hot skin
- No sweating
- Seizures or convulsions
- Unconsciousness

Left untreated heat exhaustion can lead to heat stroke very quickly. Following are the treatments for both.

Heat Exhaustion – Elevate the victim’s legs
- Provide cold compresses
- Rest in a cool place for at least a half hour
- Drink as much water as possible without guzzling it

Heat Stroke – Elevate the victim’s head and shoulders
- Notify Security (698-1911 or 55555) and have them call 911
- Cool the victim with ice packs, cold water or whatever is available

Obviously, the purpose of this memo is to provide information which, when followed, will hopefully keep us from having to deal with heat exhaustion or heat stroke. Let’s summarize:

- Know the signs/symptoms of heat related illness
- Do your best to stay out of direct sunlight for extended periods of time
- Take regular breaks in a cool area
- Stay away from caffeinated drinks during work shifts
- Do not use energy drinks under any circumstances during a shift
- Drink lots of water throughout the day

I hope this information proves to be helpful. Please remind your fellow CoStars to adhere to these guidelines. Give me a call or flag me down with any questions.

Randy Conner
Safety Manager