

HEAT-RELATED EMERGENCIES: GUIDE FOR STAR INSTRUCTORS

Our courses are scheduled to run rain or shine, and we must be careful by preparing ourselves and our students for training in conditions that could lead to a heat-related emergency. As a start, please protect yourself from sunburn with a good sunscreen (and consider re-applying that sunscreen during the day). But of more serious concern are heat-related emergencies.

HEAT-RELATED EMERGENCIES INCLUDE:

1) Heat Cramps - painful muscle spasms that usually occur in the legs and abdomen. Heat cramps are the least severe of the heat-related emergencies.

2) Heat Exhaustion (early stage) - an early indicator that the body's cooling system is becoming overwhelmed. Symptoms of heat exhaustion include:

- Cool, moist, pale, ashen or flushed skin.
- Headache, nausea, dizziness.
- Weakness, exhaustion.
- Heavy Sweating.

3) Heat Stroke (late stage) - when the body's systems are overwhelmed by heat and stop functioning. Heat stroke is a life-threatening condition. Symptoms of heat stroke include:

- Red, hot, dry skin.
- Changes in level of consciousness.
- Vomiting.

CARE FOR HEAT- RELATED EMERGENCIES

Take the following steps to care for someone suffering from a heat related emergency:

- Move the person to a cool place.
- Loosen any tight clothing.
- Remove perspiration-soaked clothing.
- Apply cool, wet towels to the skin.
- Fan the person.
- If the person is conscious, give small amounts of cool water to drink. If the person refuses water, vomits or starts to lose consciousness:
 - Call 911.
 - Place the person on their side.
 - Continue to cool the person by using water, ice, or cold packs on their wrists, ankles, groin, neck and armpits.
 - Continue to check breathing and signs of life (coughing or movement in response to rescue breaths or a pulse).

The safety of our Instructors and students is always our primary goal. Please demonstrate safety concerns during the first meeting/orientation with your students.

Here are some tips for Instructors and students for dealing with the heat:

- Bring ice, extra water, buckets, towels, spray bottles, and/or camelbacks for constant cooling and hydration.
- Dip a towel or bandanna in cool icy water and place it around the neck while riding will help (wetting the shirt is also very helpful).
- Wear a cooling vest.
- Wear appropriate light-colored and loose-fitting gear - avoid dark colors and heavy fabrics.
- Be mindful of their fellow students' and/or Instructors' condition & behavior and reporting anything unusual.

Manage your class by:

- Staying on time. Running late increases everyone's exposure to heat and extends the class into the hottest part of the day.
- Dismissing students who are impaired. No matter the cause, if they are unable to practice safely, we need to remove them from training.
- If you need to take an extra break (a short one) to have your students get a drink of water, use your best judgment to do so.
- Recognize that you are also being affected by the heat - take care of yourself and fellow Instructors. Drink lots of fluids, control body temperature with water, and consider wearing a bandana around your neck that you can re-wet at each break (or even between exercises). We encourage the use of the wider-brimmed summer **STAR** hats to help keep you protected from the sun. If you have not already picked one up or you need a replacement, please let us know and we'll be happy to send one to you.

You are prepared and trained professionals....we trust you to take care of yourselves and your students.

Use the "on-call" number (208-639-4554) to deal with any specific questions if needed.

