



DSPN

Disaster
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Continuity IQ

Fast Facts for our Valued Friends and Clients March 2009

Here are some bullets and brain teasers about current events from your friends at Disaster Survival Planning Network (DSPN). In this issue, we provide information about two lesser understood weather-related risks. If you'd like to forward this message to your colleagues, just click the "Forward Email" link at the bottom of this page.

Fast Facts about Tests and Exercises

Did you know...

- According to Gale Encyclopedia of Science, tornadoes are responsible for about 80 deaths annually in the U.S. However, heat-related fatalities have caused an average of 170 fatalities per year in the U.S. for the last 10 years, and floods have taken an average of 99 lives per year on average for the last 30 years.
- Two types of heat-related maladies commonly occur. Heat exhaustion often occurs when employees exercise in a hot, humid place and body fluids are lost through sweating, causing the body to overheat. Heat stroke, however, is more life-threatening. With heat stroke, the person's cooling system, which is controlled by the brain, stops working and the internal body temperature rises to the point where brain damage or damage to other internal organs may result. This classic form of heat stroke occurs in people whose cooling mechanisms are impaired.
- Symptoms of heat exhaustion include profuse sweating and muscle cramps. With heat stroke, however, the victim will likely be unconscious with dry skin.
- You should call a doctor for heat exhaustion if the person is unable to keep fluids down or if their mental status begins to deteriorate. Symptoms of shortness of breath, chest pain, or abdominal pain may indicate that the heat exhaustion is accompanied by more serious medical problems.

Suspected heat stroke is a true, life-threatening medical emergency. Call for an ambulance and request information as to what to do until the ambulance arrives.

- Employees can avoid heat exhaustion by not engaging in strenuous activity in hot, humid environments. Employees who are not used to the heat should be particularly careful. They should intersperse periods of rest in a cool environment with plenty of available fluids to drink. They should also avoid strenuous activities during the hottest part of the day.
- Heat stroke is more likely to occur in employees who are taking many types of blood pressure, allergy, or depression medication.
- Supervisors should be trained to specifically recognize signs of heat illness and what preventive measures to take.

- Six inches of water is enough to float some vehicles, and 12 inches of water can sweep away a large vehicle, such as a pickup or SUV.
- According to NOAA, flood deaths in the U.S. are spatially distributed across all states with unique, high-frequency fatality "hot spots" found in various regions including south-central Texas, the Ohio River Valley, and along the I-95 corridor in the Northeast.
- A recent study by the American Meteorological Society's Journal of Applied Meteorology and Climatology suggested that people between the ages of 10-29 and over 60 years of age are more vulnerable to floods.
- The research findings indicate the need for more intensive flood safety education program in order to reduce the hazards related to flood events in the U.S.

Brain Teasers

True or False

1. The symptoms of heat exhaustion are different from those of heat stroke.
2. NOAA Weather Radio uses two terms to let the public know that flooding is possible--flood watch and flood warning.
3. Cities are increasingly starting heat wave response programs that coordinate efforts among local agencies and alert residents. .
4. Snow pack levels pose a risk of flooding during spring run-off.
5. The Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) provides information about flooding that can be shared with employees.

Check your answers here...

Answers to the above questions:

1. *True.* Symptoms of heat exhaustion include profuse sweating and muscle cramps. With heat stroke, however, the victim will likely be unconscious with dry skin.
2. *False.* Only "Flood Watch" means that flooding is possible. "Flood Warning" means that flooding is occurring now. If advised to do so, you should evacuate immediately.
3. *True.* Common examples of "best practices" include activating telephone heat hotlines, alerting neighborhood volunteers, providing public air-conditioned buildings and transportation to these facilities, and working with local "aging agencies" to educate at-risk individuals.
4. *True.* Heavy rains or warm weather can cause the snow pack to melt more quickly, increasing the potential risk and severity of flooding.
5. *True.* [Click here to see the OSHA link.](#)

Readiness Check

Hard-to-remember details:

1. Have you trained employee supervisors to recognize the symptoms of heat-related illnesses?
2. Have you identified locations in your area where flooding or heat-related disasters are more likely to occur?
3. Have you reviewed terminology related to flooding and heat-related disasters?
4. If your employees are likely to experience heat-related disasters or flooding, have you included

- these disaster types in your hazards analysis and contingency planning?
5. Have you tested your plans for surviving heat-related disasters or flooding?

Comments and Contributions

Tell us what you think...



Thanks to all of you have sent us comments about this mailing.

In responding to recent incidents, did you discover an interesting detail that you would like to share with our readers? If so, send it along and we'll consider it for a future issue. If you want us to print a comment or submission about your company, be sure to give us permission when you write.

[Paul Klier](#)

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