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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Heat-related Illnesses are Always Preventable

INDIANAPOLIS (July 16, 2015) – Workers who are exposed to high temperatures and humidity are at risk for serious, potentially fatal, health issues. The Indiana Department of Labor (IDOL) is advising employers and employees to work together to prevent heat-related illnesses throughout the year, but especially during the summer months.

Three factors reduce the likelihood of heat-related illness and are critical for employee health and well-being:

- 1. Water:** Workers must not depend on thirst to determine when and how much water to drink. By the time a worker feels thirsty, he or she already is dehydrated. Proactively drink five to seven ounces of water every 15 to 20 minutes, approximately one bottle of water an hour, to replenish lost fluids.
- 2. Rest:** Regular rest breaks help workers function in hot working environments, both outdoors and indoors. Rested workers are more productive and less likely to experience a heat-related illness.
- 3. Shade:** Employers should provide outdoor workers shaded break areas. Resting in the sun does NOT effectively cool workers.

Employers are required to ensure workers are not exposed to serious health and safety risks in the workplace. Industries most affected by heat-related illnesses include: construction, commercial bakeries and laundries, foundries, transportation and utilities, agriculture and landscaping services.

The IDOL encourages employers and employees to learn about heat-related illnesses and take necessary precautions. Symptoms of heat stroke include: confusion, dizziness and the inability to sweat. *These symptoms are a medical emergency.* Call emergency services, move the affected employee to a shaded area, and attempt to cool the employee down. Taking the necessary precautions can mean the difference between life and death.

Learn more about heat stress and find additional worker safety and health resources at OSHA's heat stress webpage <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/heatillness/index.html>

Employees and employers also should download OSHA's heat stress app for Android or iPhone. This newly updated app provides risk assessment based on local temperature and humidity levels. https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/heatillness/heat_index/heat_app.html

Employers can request free, onsite safety and health assistance from INSafe, IDOL's workplace safety and health consultation division, by visiting www.in.gov/dol/insafeconsultation.

About the Indiana Department of Labor:

The mission of the Indiana Department of Labor is to advance the safety, health and prosperity of Hoosiers in the workplace. In order to make significant strides, we emphasize both enforcement and compliance assistance by employers. www.in.gov/dol

About INSafe:

INSafe, a division of the Indiana Department of Labor, provides no cost safety and health assistance to Indiana businesses through an onsite consultation program staffed by safety and health professionals. Learn more at www.in.gov/dol/insafe.htm

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