

The following information was obtained from the U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration. The following information is the American Volkssporting Association, (AVA), guidelines for Clubs and members use.

**REMEMBER: IF IT IS TOO HOT, CANCEL OR RESCHEDULE THE WALKS! IT IS BETTER TO ERR ON THE SIDE OF CAUTION THAN TO HAVE SOMEONE INJURED.**

### **Prevention**

Heat-related illnesses can be prevented. Prevention requires event sponsors and walkers to recognize heat hazards. Walk sponsors should commit to:

- Take extra precautions to walkers.
- Train walk volunteers and walkers to control and recognize heat hazards.
- Determine, for each walker whether total heat stress is too high, both from the conditions of that day and recognizing carryover effect possibilities.
- Implement controls to reduce heat stress: more frequent check point/water stations along the walking route, providing fans for cooling at check points/water stations. It is very important to provide walkers with sufficient places to rest, with shade, and fluids.
- Nothing beats cool water, nothing. Sports drinks with electrolyte are good, but should Cooling neck wraps and other items used in industry to combat for walkers are readily available at lumber yards, and many sporting goods stores.

### **Special Note on Water**

Provide cool water for walks. Avoid electrolyte containing sports drinks, however, if you do provide them limit walkers to only one per person. Nothing beats cool water for beating the heat, nothing.

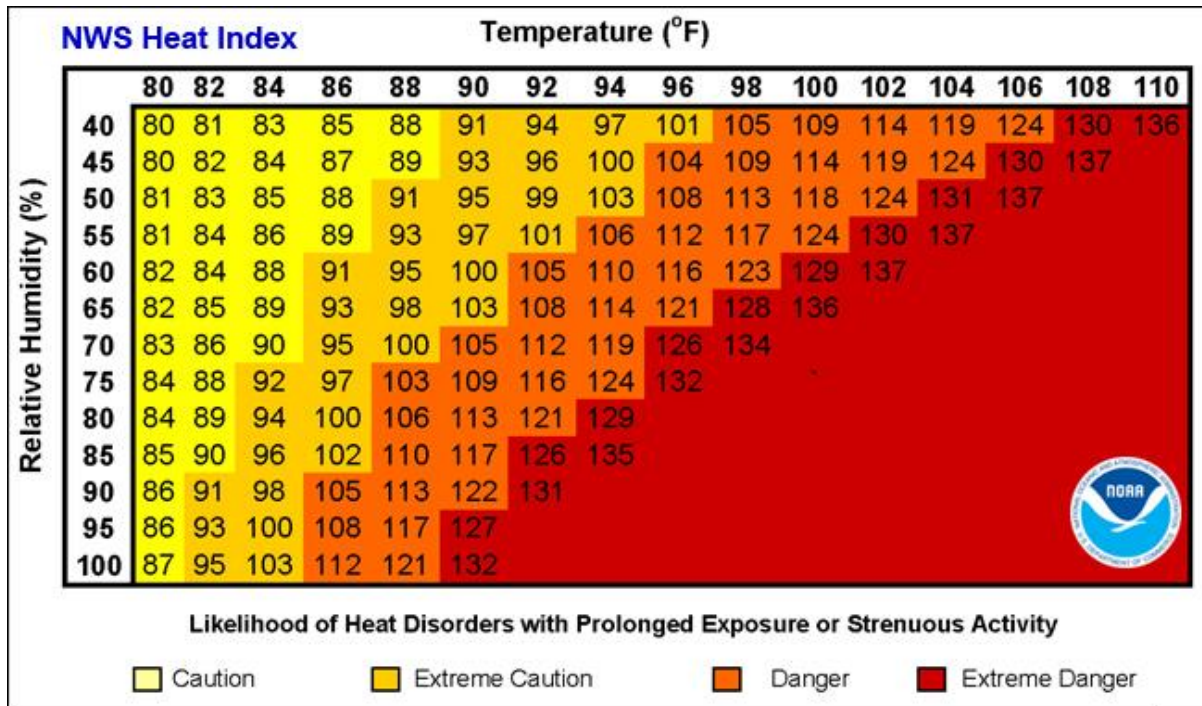
Avoid caffeinated drinks, and drinks with a high sugar content. Consumption of these drinks may lead to dehydration. Energy drinks should be avoided completely. Energy drinks have a extremely high sugar and caffeine content: think of them as “Heart Attack in a Can”. Alcohol should also be avoided.

### **Heat Index**

Heat Index is referred to as the apparent temperature. It is a measure of how hot it feels when relative humidity is factored in with the actual ambient temperature.

As the heat index rises above 103°F, there is a **high risk** for heat-related illness, so additional measures to protect walkers are needed. Increase the number of check point/water stations along the walking route where water, rest and shade are provided. Remind walkers to drink plenty of water every 15 to 20 minutes. A Heat Index Chart from the U.S. National Weather service is on the following page.

**National Weather Service Heat Index Chart**



The above Heat Index Chart should be referenced on the days leading up to the walking event. If relative humidity and ambient temperature are too high its best to plan accordingly. Cancel, reschedule, or start the event earlier in the morning.

The Club sponsoring the walk should ensure all volunteers know the procedures for responding to possible heat related illness. It is a good idea to incorporate a quick briefing of all volunteers assisting with the walk before the walk begins. Take five-minutes to discuss all safety related issues that the walkers may or may not encounter. Never underestimate the “little things” that get overlooked that can cause big problems.

**Plan Ahead For Hot Weather Checklist:**

- Have a list of hot weather supplies: ice-chest, bottled water, water coolers, shade, and chairs.
- Have an action plan for heat related illness: who will provide 1<sup>st</sup> Aid, and who will call emergency services.
- Have a means of accessing current “real time” weather information before and during the walk. Volunteers at the “turn around point, and check points should have this available as well.
- Have a pre-walk safety briefing with all volunteers.
- Have a pre-walk safety briefing with all walkers.

The chart below from the Center for Disease Control shows **symptoms** and **first aid measures** to take if a worker shows signs of a heat-related illness.

## HEAT STRESS

# First Aid for Heat Illness

Cooling is key. Know the symptoms and treatment of heat illness.

**Things you need to know:**

- Heat illness can strike quickly—learn to recognize the symptoms.
- Workers with heat illness should stop working, get cool, and drink fluids.
- Altered mental state can be a sign of heat stroke and requires immediate attention.
- When treating severe heat illness, cooling is the first priority.

	<b>Signs and Symptoms</b> <small>Symptoms can occur in any order. For example, a person will not always experience heat cramps before they suffer from heat exhaustion.</small>	<b>What to Do</b>
<b>Less Severe</b>	<p><b>Heat Rash/Prickly Heat</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Red cluster of pimples or small blisters, usually on neck, upper chest, groin, under breasts, and in elbow creases</li> <li>Extensive areas of skin that do not sweat on heat exposure, but present gooseflesh appearance that subsides with cool environments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When possible, a cooler, less humid work environment is the best treatment</li> <li>Keep rash area dry</li> <li>Powder can be applied to increase comfort</li> <li>Do not use ointments or creams, as they may impair cooling—warm, moist skin can make the rash worse</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Heat Cramps</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Muscle cramps, pain, or spasms in the abdomen, arms, or legs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Drink fluids every 15 to 20 minutes and eat a snack or sports drink</li> <li>Avoid salt tablets</li> <li>Get medical help if the worker has heart problems, is on a low sodium diet, or if cramps do not subside within 1 hour</li> </ul>
<b>Severe</b>	<p><b>Heat Syncope (Fainting)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fainting, dizziness, or light-headedness after standing or suddenly rising from a sitting/lying position</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sit or lie down in a cool place when beginning to feel faint or dizzy</li> <li>Slowly drink water or clear juice</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Heat Exhaustion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Headache</li> <li>Nausea</li> <li>Dizziness, weakness</li> <li>Irritability</li> <li>Thirst, heavy sweating</li> <li>Elevated body temperature</li> <li>Decreased urine output</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Call for medical help or take worker to a health facility for evaluation and treatment</li> <li>Stay with worker until help arrives</li> <li>Remove worker from hot area and give liquids to drink</li> <li>Remove unnecessary clothing, including shoes and socks</li> <li>Cool worker with water, cold compresses, an ice bath, or fans</li> <li>Encourage frequent sips of cool water</li> </ul>
<b>OFTEN FATAL</b>	<p><b>Heat Stroke</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Confusion, altered mental state, slurred speech, loss of consciousness</li> <li>Hot, dry skin or profuse sweating</li> <li>Seizures</li> <li>Very high body temperatures</li> <li>Fatal if treatment delayed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This is an emergency! Call for emergency care immediately!</li> <li>Move worker to a cool area and remove outer clothing</li> <li>Cool worker with water, cold compresses, an ice bath, or fans</li> <li>Circulate air around worker to speed cooling</li> <li>Place cold, wet cloths or ice on head, neck, armpits, and groin</li> <li>Stay with worker until emergency medical services arrive</li> </ul>

## Prevention

**Prevention of heat related injury and illness is key. You can walk in hot weather, however, there are certain preventative measures you must take.**

Heat-related illnesses can be prevented. Prevention requires walkers to recognize heat hazards. The Club sponsoring the walk should commit to:

- Take extra precautions to new walkers, and older walkers. Ensure there is plenty of available water for everyone. Walking in extreme heat requires consumption of at least a couple of cups of water, or a 16 ounce bottle every fifteen or twenty minutes.
- Clubs conducting walks should ensure that volunteers are knowledgeable and know how to recognize heat hazards and to deal with them. Mitigation is key.
- Determine, for each walker whether total heat stress is too high, both from the conditions of that day and recognizing carryover effect possibilities of the previous day's activities.
- Implement engineering and administrative controls to reduce heat stress.
- Provide sufficient rest, shade, and fluids.

## Hydration

Proper hydration throughout the walk is one of the single most important action to be done. This will prevent a heat related illness. For those walking for two hours or more, also provide access to additional fluids that contain electrolytes (sports drinks).

Walkers lose salt and other electrolytes when they sweat. Substantial loss of electrolytes can cause muscle cramps and other dangerous health problems. Water cannot replace electrolytes; other types of beverages are needed. Water or other fluids provided by the Club sponsoring the walk should not only be cool, but should also be provided in a location throughout the walk with easy to access, and in sufficient quantity for the duration of the walk.