

# JIFNEWS

A Quarterly Newsletter from the Somerset County Joint Insurance Fund featuring Safety, Health & Wellness



## SURVIVING THE HOT WEATHER

SOURCE: NATIONAL SAFETY COUNCIL

Did you know your body is constantly in a struggle to disperse the heat it produces? Most of the time, you're hardly aware of it – unless your body is exposed to more heat than it can handle.

In 2013, 372 people died in the U.S. from exposure to excessive heat, according to Injury Facts 2016, the annual statistical report on unintentional injuries produced by the National Safety Council. Heat-related illnesses can escalate rapidly, leading to delirium, organ damage and even death.

There are several heat-related illnesses, including heatstroke (the most severe), heat exhaustion and heat cramps. Those most at risk include:

- **Infants and young children**
- **Elderly people**
- **Pets**
- **Individuals with heart or circulatory problems or other long-term illness**
- **People who work outdoors**
- **Athletes and people who like to exercise – especially beginners**
- **Individuals taking medications that alter sweat production**
- **Alcoholics and drug abusers**

**HEATSTROKE** can occur when the ability to sweat fails and body temperature rises quickly. The brain and vital organs are effectively "cooked" as body temperature rises to a dangerous level in a matter of minutes. Heatstroke is often fatal, and those who do survive may have permanent damage to their organs.

Someone experiencing heatstroke will have extremely hot skin, and an altered mental state, ranging from slight confusion to coma. Seizures also can result. Ridding the body of excess heat is crucial for survival.

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## PEDESTRIAN SAFETY WHILE WALKING

SOURCE: NATIONAL SAFETY COUNCIL

We rarely are more vulnerable than when walking in urban areas, crossing busy streets and negotiating traffic. And we all are pedestrians from time to time, so it's important to pay attention to what is going on around us.

### Cell Phone Distracted Walking

It has become such a big problem in recent years that Injury Facts® 2015, the statistical report on unintentional deaths and injuries published by the National Safety Council, for the first time has included statistics on cell phone distracted walking. According to Injury Facts, distracted walking incidents involving cell phones accounted for more than 11,100 injuries between 2000 and 2011.

- 52% of cell phone distracted walking injuries happen at home
- 68% of those injured are women
- 54% are age 40 or younger
- Nearly 80% of the injuries were due to a fall

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# PEDESTRIAN SAFETY CONT.

## The Vehicle Factor

While many communities are implementing measures to become more "walkable," like adding more paths and traffic-calming measures, there still is a long way to go to keep pedestrians safe. Malls surrounded by parking lots, few sidewalks, blind intersections and high traffic areas all contribute to pedestrian fatalities and injuries.

- In 2013, 6,100 pedestrians were killed by motor vehicles
- That same year, about 160,000 pedestrian injuries required medical attention
- 23% of deaths and injuries result from pedestrians darting into the street, with the majority younger than age 15
- The number of pedestrian deaths has decreased significantly since the 1970s; during that decade, deaths were between 8,400 and 10,300
- From 2002 to 2013, death rates didn't change much; they hovered around 6,000, with a low of 5,300 in 2009

## Head Up, Phone Down

While pedestrian-vehicle injuries are the fifth leading cause of death for children ages 5 to 19, according to SafeKids.org, no age group is immune. Here are a few tips from NHTSA and NSC for all ages:

- Look left, right and left again before crossing the street
- Make eye contact with drivers of oncoming vehicles to make sure they see you
- Be aware of drivers even when you're in a crosswalk; vehicles have blind spots
- Don't wear headphones while walking
- Never use a cell phone or other electronic device while walking
- If your view is blocked, move to a place where you can see oncoming traffic
- Never rely on a car to stop
- Children younger than 10 should cross the street with an adult
- Only cross at designated crosswalks
- Wear bright and/or reflective clothing
- Walk in groups

# HOT WEATHER CONT.

- Move the person into a half-sitting position in the shade
- Call for emergency medical help immediately
- If humidity is below 75%, spray the victim with water and fan them vigorously; if humidity is above 75%, apply ice to neck, armpits or groin
- Do not give aspirin or acetaminophen
- Do not give the victim anything to drink

**HEAT EXHAUSTION** can set in when the body loses an excessive amount of salt and water. People who work outdoors and athletes are particularly susceptible.

Symptoms are similar to those of the flu and can include severe thirst, fatigue, headache, nausea, vomiting and, sometimes, diarrhea. Other symptoms include profuse sweating, clammy or pale skin, dizziness, rapid pulse and normal or slightly elevated body temperature.

Uncontrolled heat exhaustion can evolve into heatstroke, so make sure to treat the victim quickly.

- Move them to a shaded or air-conditioned area
- Give them water or other cool, nonalcoholic beverages
- Apply wet towels or have them take a cool shower

**HEAT CRAMPS** are muscle spasms that usually affect the legs or abdominal muscles, often after physical activity. Excessive sweating reduces salt levels in the body, which can result in heat cramps.

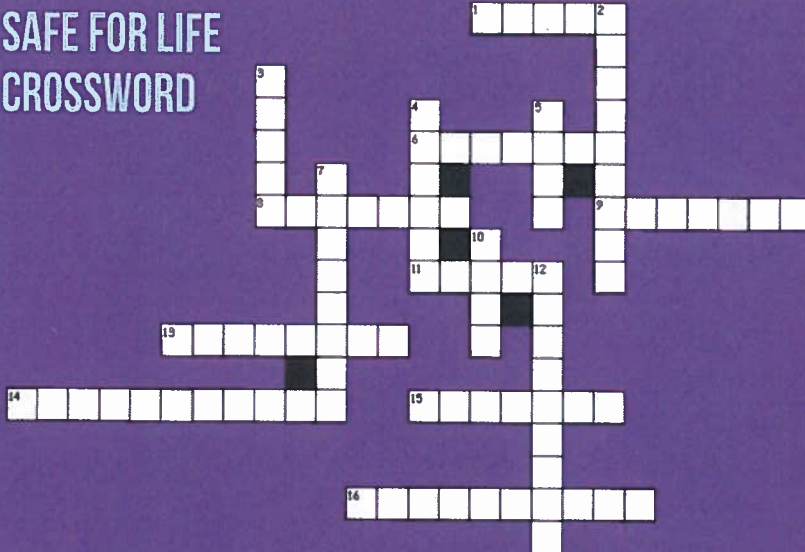
Workers or athletes with pain or spasms in the abdomen, arms or legs should not return to work for a few hours. Instead:

- Sit or lie down in the shade
- Drink cool water or a sports drink
- Stretch affected muscles
- Seek medical attention if you have heart problems or if the cramps don't get better in an hour

The best way to avoid a heat-related illness is to limit exposure outdoors during hot days, especially from 11 am to 3 pm... the hottest part of the day. Also:

- Drink more liquid than you think you need and avoid alcohol
- Wear loose, lightweight clothing and a hat
- Replace salt lost from sweating by drinking fruit juice or sports drinks
- Wear sunscreen; sunburn affects the body's ability to cool itself

## SAFE FOR LIFE CROSSWORD



### ACROSS

1. Keeping an eye out for hazards can help you identify and \_\_\_\_\_ them before an injury occurs.
6. Check emails and send texts before you start \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Never use a cell phone while \_\_\_\_\_, even hands-free.
9. Discuss the dangers of mixing prescription drugs with \_\_\_\_\_.
11. Check to make sure your \_\_\_\_\_ detector is working properly.
13. Provide adequate \_\_\_\_\_ in every room and stairway.
14. Prescription \_\_\_\_\_ account for more drug overdoses than heroin and cocaine combined.
15. When driving on long trips, take regular breaks to avoid \_\_\_\_\_.
16. When calling 9-1-1, stay on the line until the \_\_\_\_\_ says you can hang up.

### DOWN

2. \_\_\_\_\_ an alcohol and drug-free driver or arrange alternate transportation.
3. More than a third of \_\_\_\_\_ injuries and deaths happen at home.
4. Signs of painkiller addiction include excessive mood \_\_\_\_\_ or anxiety
5. Always allow adequate \_\_\_\_\_ to get to your destination.
7. All medicines and \_\_\_\_\_ should always be kept up and away and out of a child's reach.
10. Keep a fully stocked emergency preparedness kit in your \_\_\_\_\_ and vehicle.
12. Practice \_\_\_\_\_ drills with your family.

Across: 1. Avoid 6. Walking 8. Driving 9. Alcohol 11. Smoke 13. Lighting 14. Painkillers 15. Fatigue 16. Dispatcher  
Down: 2. Designate 3. Child 4. Swings 5. Time 7. Vitamins 10. Home 12. Emergency