

LOGGING/FORESTRY SAFETY SERIES

HEAT ILLNESS

Photo credit: Cornelis F. de Hoop, PhD

Incident Summary:

James was performing choker setting operations, when he complained that he was hot. He was instructed to grab some water and to sit in the shade. Coworkers later noticed that James was stumbling and he seemed disoriented. He was assisted by coworkers when he became short of breath and unresponsive. At that point, James' skin was very hot, red and dry. Because he was thought to be suffering from heat stress, his clothes were removed. He was airlifted for treatment and kept in an ICU.

Discussion Questions:

1. What were James' symptoms?
2. Have you ever experienced any symptoms of heat illness (e.g. feeling hot, excessive sweating, nausea, fatigue, weakness, fainting, headache, irregular pulse, dizziness or confusion)?
3. What do you think contributed to James' condition?
4. Could this incident have been prevented?

Take Home Message:

Know the symptoms of heat related illness.

Confusion or disorientation is a very serious symptom of heat-related illness that requires medical attention immediately.

