



# ARCHDIOCESE OF INDIANAPOLIS

## Safety and Loss Control News

July 2013

Michael J. Witka, Director of Parish Financial Services and Risk Management  
Archdiocese of Indianapolis • (317) 236-1558

Prepared by Gallagher Bassett Services, Inc.

## Warm Climate Activities, Insects and Food Safety

As we are in the midst of the warm-weather months, we want to reinforce the importance of being proactive in providing a safe environment and well-being for parish members, volunteers, employees and guests. While you may have many ministry and charity programs running such as day care, day camps, vacation bible school, etc., we want to heighten your awareness of four prevalent risks associated with warmer climates and outdoor activities, including heat exhaustion, heat stroke, insect exposure and food safety.

It is of utmost importance that everyone remains aware of their surroundings and the constituencies you are serving. Please take some time to review the following general safety tips, especially those of you participating in programs within the parish or ministry. We also need to be aware of how some participants may not respond well to the heat, mainly seniors.

To reduce the risk of heat-related illness, consider the following tactics:

1. **Acclimatize.** This means allowing the body to adjust to the heat naturally. The best way to do this is to gradually increase the time you spend in the heat, until you reach the total amount of time desired. For example, on the first day, limit your heat exposure to 20% with a 20% increase in exposure each additional day.
2. **Drink before you are thirsty.** A person's sense of thirst kicks in only after a significant loss of fluids. Make sure you are consuming plenty of fluids throughout the day. Water is the preferable choice however drinks that have electrolytes such as sports drinks

are also good choices. The body can lose as much as three gallons of fluid a day while working in hot, humid weather. As a rule of thumb, a person should drink at least 8 oz. every 15 to 30 minutes while engaging in activities on hot days.

3. **Avoid caffeinated drinks.** Beverages containing caffeine, such as soda or coffee, can lead to dehydration. Instead, choose beverages such as water or sport drinks. Alcoholic beverages should also be avoided.
4. **Take breaks.** Use break times to drink fluids or spray down with a hose or sprinkler.
5. **Use sunscreen of at least SPF 50.** Apply sunscreen prior to going outdoors and then at frequent intervals throughout the day.
6. **Eat lightly.** Light nutritious meals, preferably cold, are better than heavier, hot meals due to the fact that they are easier to digest. Hot weather increases digestion time, making fatty foods harder to digest.
7. **Wear clothing appropriate to weather conditions.** Wear light-colored, loose-fitting clothing made of breathable fabrics such as cotton. Dress in layers for events that begin in the morning with a cooler climate, followed by a rise in temperature in the afternoon and cooler temperatures in the evening.

**Seniors (that is, people aged 65 years and older) are more likely to experience heat-related illness than younger people for several reasons:**



**After cooking meat and poultry on the grill, keep it hot until served—at 140° or warmer. Set cooked meat to the side of the grill rack or keep hot in an oven set at approximately 200°F, in a chafing dish, slow cooker or on a warming tray.**

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- Seniors do not adjust as well as young people to sudden changes in temperature.
- They are more likely to have a medical condition that changes the normal body response to heat.
- Seniors can be more likely to take prescription medication that makes it difficult for the body to regulate temperature. In some cases, the medication may even inhibit perspiration.
- Monitoring seniors closely in warm temperatures is essential to preventing heat-related illness.

### Heat Exhaustion and Heat Stress

Heat exhaustion is a serious disorder that develops when the body loses more fluid through sweating than it is taking in. This occurs when the body cannot cool itself properly during periods of extreme heat and excessive sweating, without adequate replacement of fluid and salt. There are mild warning signs to be aware of, including heat cramps, fainting, and prickly heat rash. Heat cramps tend to occur in the muscles of the body that do the hardest work. Fainting is the body's way of letting you know your body is having difficulty coping with the heat. Prickly heat is a rash that is caused when sweat cannot evaporate and in turn clogs the sweat ducts.

#### Signs of Heat Exhaustion and Heat Stress

- Profuse sweating
- Clammy skin
- Muscle cramps/aches
- Pale or flushed skin
- Fatigue or weakness
- Nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea
- Headache
- Feeling faint or dizzy
- Near normal body temperature

#### First Aid

- Move the person to an area of shade or a cool place and apply cold water or ice packs to their skin.
- Have the person lie on their back, elevate their feet and let them rest.
- If the person is conscious, give half a glass of water or sport drink every 15 minutes.
- Get medical help if the person's symptoms or condition is not improving.

### Heat Stroke

Heat stroke is a medical emergency! This occurs when the body's heat regulating system breaks down under stress and

sweating stops. Unless the victim receives quick treatment, death can occur.

#### Signs of Heat Stroke

- Body temperature of 103 degrees Fahrenheit or higher.
- Change in mental status, including confusion or delirious behavior.
- Seizures, loss of consciousness or coma.
- Absence of sweating or sweating profusely.
- Hot, dry, flushed skin.
- Throbbing headache.

#### First Aid

- Immediately call for medical help and begin first-aid treatments.
- Move the victim to a cool place and attempt to cool the victim quickly by giving a cool bath or fanning.
- If the victim is conscious, offer half a glass of water or sport drink every 15 minutes.

### Insect Exposure and Relief

In addition to being aware of heat-related illnesses, it is also important to be aware of insect exposures. To avoid insect bites, use an over-the-counter insect repellent. If purchasing a repellent is not an option, try to avoid being near open beverages that contain sugar or sweeteners. Sweetened beverages, like soda and juice, attract stinging insects. In addition, standing water is a breeding ground for mosquitoes. Empty all sources of standing water and cover pools at the end of the day.

When outdoors, always wear shoes and dress in long pants and a light-weight, long-sleeved shirt to cover the skin. Also, wear light-colored clothing.

If you are stung by a bee or wasp, observe the area where you were stung to determine if the insect's stinger remains. If the stinger is present, use a firm object to sweep across the area and pull the stinger out. Do not squeeze or pinch the skin to remove the stinger because this will cause additional venom to be released into the bite area.

For immediate insect bite relief, use soap and water to clean the area of the sting. Treat any reaction by applying a cool compress, or ice to the affected area. To relieve redness and pain, apply hydrocortisone to the affected area. If a severe allergic reaction develops, such as difficulty breathing or swallowing, call 911 and seek emergency care immediately.

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For those in the Northeast and Upper Midwest regions, be on the lookout for ticks. Some ticks carry Lyme disease, which can affect the nervous system. Ticks are most common in wooded areas. If you are in a wooded area, wear long pants with long socks, boots and a long-sleeved shirt and hat to avoid ticks.

### Food Safety in Warm Weather

Food-borne illness often increases during the summer months because food-borne bacteria grow fastest at temperatures between 90°F to 110°F. Bacteria also need moisture to flourish and the hot and humid summer weather is the perfect catalyst. To avoid contracting food-borne illness, follow these four simple steps:

**Clean:** Wash hands and surfaces often. Unwashed hands are a prime cause of food-borne illness.

**Separate:** Don't cross-contaminate. Cross-contamination during preparation, grilling, and serving food is a prime cause of food-borne illness. When grilling, always wash platters that contained raw meat and use a clean platter for cooked meat.

**Cook:** Cook food to proper temperatures. Food is safely cooked when it is heated for a long enough time and at a high enough temperature to kill harmful bacteria that causes food-borne illness. When cooking hamburger, cook until juices run clear. When cooking chicken or pork, cook until all of the meat is white in color. If the meat has a pinkish color, it is not fully cooked.

**Chill:** Refrigerate food promptly. Holding food at an unsafe temperature is a prime cause of food-borne illness. Keep cold food cold! Food left out of refrigeration at room temperature for more than 2 hours may not be safe to eat and should be thrown away. When temperatures are above 90°F, food should not be left out for any length of time. Remember—if you have any doubt, throw it out!

**Heat:** Keep hot food hot. After cooking meat and poultry on the grill, keep it hot until served—at 140°F or warmer.

Keep cooked meats hot by setting them to the side of the grill rack, not directly over the coals where they could overcook. The cooked meat can also be kept hot in an oven set at approximately 200°F, in a chafing dish or slower cooker, or on a warming tray.

For more information, visit [www.foodsafety.gov](http://www.foodsafety.gov) or [www.fsis.usda.gov/fact\\_sheets](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/fact_sheets).

## Hand Protection

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, one million workers are treated for serious hand injuries each year and hand injuries are the second-leading cause of days away from work. The *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine* concluded that most hand injuries occur in the first half of the day—from 8 a.m. until noon, with the 10 o'clock hour being the most dangerous. For workers starting at other times, the majority of hand injuries occurred around three and a half hours into the shift.

Actions taken by employees that often result in hand injuries include: lack of attention to the work, not using appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), not using the appropriate tool for the job, incorrect use of tools and equipment, performing tasks in a hurry and improper lifting or moving techniques.

To ensure hand safety in the workplace it is important for employees to follow safety procedures, use PPE such as gloves whenever necessary, maintain PPE, and follow proper procedures to complete the job. If you are unsure of a safety practice or what PPE to use, ask your supervisor.

Additional precautions include:

- Follow safe work practices
- Use engineering controls that prevent contact between hands and fingers and the machine blade or other identified hazards
- Follow safety signs and warning labels
- Report potential hazard(s) to the supervisor
- Use appropriate PPE
- Don't wear loose clothing, gloves or jewelry when working on or near machinery with moving parts



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**Michael J. Witka**  
**Director of Parish Financial Services**  
**and Risk Management**  
**1400 N. Meridian Street**  
**Indianapolis, IN 46202**  
**(317) 236-1558**



**Gallagher Bassett Services, Inc.**

If there are any subjects you would like to see addressed in this newsletter, or questions about a topic presented, please contact Ms. Amanda Weller, Gallagher Bassett Services, Inc., Two Pierce Place, Itasca, IL 60143, Telephone: 815-236-5170, Email: [Amanda\\_Weller@gbtpa.com](mailto:Amanda_Weller@gbtpa.com).

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## Fan Safety

During the warm summer months, fans are essential to keeping us cool.

However, there are some important safety items that you should be aware of prior to using a fan. With this in mind, let's review a few items to make sure that your fans are safe for use.



Today take a look at the fans around the areas where you work.

### ***Is the guard in place?***

Fans that are less than 7 feet off the ground must have a guard on them to prevent injury. The opening needs to be 1/2 inch or less. Take a look at your fans. Ensure the guards are in place and secure.

### ***Is the fan clean?***

Fan blades that are clean and free of dust and dirt build-up actually move more air than a dirty blade and will keep you cooler. Take a moment today and blow out your fans. Get as much of the dust and dirt off the blades and guarding that you can.

### ***Is the plug in good condition?***

Check the plug and cord and make sure all the electrical prongs are in place and the cord isn't frayed. Make sure the motor cover is securely in place.

If you find a problem with a fan in your area, write a work order or see your supervisor. Let's get these taken care of early in the season rather than waiting until it gets extremely hot!

-Information excerpted from "Fan Safety," Safety Toolbox Talks, [www.safetytoolboxtalks.com](http://www.safetytoolboxtalks.com).