



## 1<sup>ST</sup> Infantry Division and Fort Riley Heat Injury Prevention Bulletin 2 August 2016



**Heat Injuries:** So far in FY16, two FORSCOM Soldiers died from heat related injuries sustained during training. Heat Injuries are a major threat in both training and combat. They kill or disable Soldiers every year. Why? The human body is a small radiator that is easily overloaded by:

- Exercise/work (15 times more heat is produced).
- Hot/humid weather.
- Too little fluids.
- Too few electrolytes (salts or minerals) can be caused by drinking water only and little or no food intake. Consistent replenishment of fluids and calories is essential to maintain energy levels during physical training and military training exercises.

Human organs cannot be trained to tolerate heat (i.e. to not get cooked). When it occurs, organ damage is permanent; it cannot be overcome by willpower or motivation.

### Recommended Safe Practices:

- Drink more fluids regardless of your activity level.
- Don't drink liquids that contain alcohol or large amounts of sugar.
- Understand and recognize the dangers of heat stroke, heat exhaustion, and heat cramps.
- The best defense against heat-related injury and illness is prevention.
- Know the Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT).
- Use the 5-steps of Risk Management to prevent heat injuries. (Identify Hazards; Assess Hazards; Develop Controls; Implement Controls; Supervise and Evaluate.

### Lessons Learned:

Each year an average of 2-3 Soldiers have died from heat stroke and more than 1000 Soldiers have developed a heat-related illness that required medical attention and/or lost duty time. Leaders and Soldiers should understand that sun safety and the prevention of heat injuries are vital to sustaining combat power. Leaders must continually be aware of the condition of their Soldiers and be especially alert for signs and symptoms of heat and sun injuries. Prevention, early detection, and immediate treatment are the leader initiatives through which heat and sun injuries should be managed in the field. Exposure to extreme heat is a reality of military training and unit preparation for operational missions. Many heat illnesses are preventable, and none should be fatal. Leaders must assess unit's missions and training requirements against the risk associated with operating in warm weather environments. Early recognition and treatment of Soldiers presenting with symptoms of heat illnesses are key to saving lives.

**Brave Responsible On-point**