

Just a Reminder about Hydration

The severely hot temperatures are here. Staying hydrated is crucial during this time of year and sometimes thinking about hydration once you are on shift is too late. Hydration can be determined before you come on shift. In other words, what you do when you are off duty will affect you when you are on duty.

A good rule of thumb to follow every day is to drink half your body weight in ounces of water per day. It may seem like a lot but does eight 8oz glasses make sense for everyone? For example, if you weight 200 lbs, you should be drinking 100 oz of water every day, in normal conditions. Due to the extreme heat and physical demands, you may have to increase to your water intake to equal your weight in ounces. Keep in mind your electrolyte balance if you are perspiring.

Take a look for more reminders:

- **Don't count on thirst**

Our bodies often don't warn us in time when we are low on fluids. Start hydrating the day before physical activity. Drink before, during and after exercise. The best way to know you are well hydrated is your pee should be pale yellow. See Chart at the end of this document.

- **Electro what?**

You also lose electrolytes when you sweat. If electrolytes like sodium and or potassium go too low serious health consequences can occur. You need a carbohydrate (glucose, etc.) to fuel the cell's sodium pump. Try half strength sports drinks (half water, your choice of sports drink).

- **Energy drinks can kill!**

According to a news article that appeared in the New York Daily News in January of 2013: *A new government survey suggests the number of people seeking emergency treatment after consuming energy drinks has doubled nationwide during the past four years, the same period in which the supercharged drink industry has surged in popularity in convenience stores, bars and on college campuses.* To see more of this article go to: <http://www.nydailynews.com/life-style/health/buzzkill-number-energy-drink-er-patients-doubles-article-1.1241131>. Not only have more people been going to the emergency room, but there have been several deaths associated with these drinks over the last few years. These products contain chemicals that can harm your heart and act as a diuretic that will cause you to lose fluid through excess urination — the last thing you want to do if you are sweating. Three local firefighters had cardiac abnormal rhythms that require emergency department evaluation. **Look at your supplements as well! Know what you are taking.**

- **Signs of dehydration and heat illness**

Look out for dark yellow urine, low energy, dizziness, cramps, loss of coordination, headaches, or fatigue. If these symptoms are left untreated serious illness can occur.

- **What to do if symptoms arise**

Replace fluids, drink slowly until the nausea passes. Rest in a cool, shaded area until all symptoms pass. A fan helps if dizzy, lie with the legs elevated to promote circulation to the head, and then get medical attention. Do not resume exercise if any symptoms continue.

Are you hydrated??

Use the following chart to check your urine to determine if you are.

***If you are taking vitamins, this chart is not accurate.*

