

Many independent school athletics associations provide safety information and material addressing heat stress and athletic participation. The school physician and athletic trainer are sources of information as well. In addition, the National Federation of State High School Associations has material on this topic. This material can be accessed at the Association's web site at: <http://www.nfhs.org>. Scroll down to the bottom and select Sports Medicine.

The National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA) provides safety tips for athletes who play or practice when there are high temperatures. They include the following recommendations:

- **Unrestricted access to water is critical.** Have water and sports drinks on hand.
- Keep beverages cold.
- Replacement of lost fluids is the key safeguard to prevent heat-related incidents. Hydrate before, during and after activity. An individual can lose up to a half-gallon in fluids during outdoor play in extreme temperatures.
- Remove unnecessary equipment - such as helmets and padding - when conditions become extreme.
- Use light colored, lightweight clothing that protects against the sun.
- If athletes are not acclimatized to the weather, encourage a gradual adjustment to hot weather. During the first week or so, hold shorter practices with lighter equipment so players can acclimate to the heat.
- Follow a strict work-to-rest ratio, such as 10-minute breaks after 40 minutes of exercise.

The NATA's handout - Beat the Heat can be accessed at:

http://www.nata.org/sites/default/files/Hydration_Heat_Illness_Handout.pdf

Additionally, having current medical forms and up-to-date health histories for student-athletes will help identify students with medical conditions that may put them at greater risk for heat-related illness. Overweight or obese football players are the most at risk and linemen are the most vulnerable. Your emergency management plan should include procedures to deal with heat exhaustion, heat stroke and other related illnesses.

[1] National Athletic Trainers Association -

Executive Summary of National Athletic Trainers Association Position Statement on Exertional Heat Illnesses.

Resources:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/heatstress

Gatorade Sports Science Institute. www.gssiweb.com

National Athletic Trainers Association. www.nata.org

UGA Today. *Deaths Triple Among Football Players, Morning Temperatures Thought to Play a Role*. Professor Andrew Grundstein, February 2012.

<http://www.wrightspecialty.com>

Wright Specialty Insurance provides general information and material through this document to educational institutions throughout the United States. This document is not intended as a substitute for professional consultation or legal advice with respect to any issue identified or discussed. Wright Specialty Insurance makes no representations about the suitability of this information and material for any purpose other than discussion and disclaims any liability for damages of any kind arising out of the use of the information provided. Consult with your insurance representative, risk manager and legal counsel if you have legal, procedural or safety-related questions.