

PERSONAL SAFETY AND WELLNESS ON INCIDENTS



Maintaining your own personal safety and wellness while assigned to the incident is essential. Upon arrival at incident camp, take time to locate of the First Aid Station and Law Enforcement and Security Management Personnel.

Safety Tips

Heat Stress

Heat stress occurs when the body's core temperature rises beyond safe limits. Evaporation of sweat is the body's main line of defense against heat. As sweat evaporates it cools the body. When water lost by sweating is not replaced the body's heat controls break down and the body temperature climbs dangerously.

Prevention - Acclimate yourself to the heat. Maintain a high level of aerobic fitness. Drink several cups of water, before, during and after work. Limit caffeine drinks. Prevent excess exposure to sun. To minimize UV exposure – keep skin covered by wearing a hat and long-sleeved shirt. Wear sunglasses the filter out 100 percent of UV rays. Use protective sunscreen lotion, and lip balm. Wear the appropriate clothing for conditions. Wash thoroughly each day to keep pores clean. Modify the way you work. Pace yourself.

Walking/Foot Safety

Ensure the proper fit of footwear. Break in new footwear before incident assignments. Change socks daily and wear clean quality cushioned socks which fit snugly to avoid blisters. Wear shoes with slip-resistant heels and soles with firm, flexible support. Make sure laces are kept tied.

Avoid slips trips, falls and strains. Be aware that camp terrain may be uneven with loose or rocky soil. Walk carefully at all times. Watch out for tent lines and stakes, and loose gear. Use a flashlight at night to illuminate pathways. Keep work areas clean, dry, orderly and free of obstacles that create tripping and slipping hazards.

Keep aisles and passageways clear to allow for safe access. Inspect chairs and desks for defective parts. Keep work area sufficiently lighted. Ask for help lifting heavy loads.

Noise Levels

Excessive noise can cause stress, irritability, sleep loss and possible hearing loss. Set up work and rest areas away from noisy equipment, such as generators.

Water

Use only potable water from approved source.

Sanitation

Wash your hands before eating or drinking and after using the toilet at all times. Carry instant hand sanitizers, since soap and water may not always be available.

Security Tips

- Take time to become familiar with the incident surroundings
- Know the layout of the camp
- Know where to get assistance if needed – interface regularly with law enforcement and security managers
- Keep security officials aware of your comings and goings
- Learn some self-defense tactics
- Keep your head up and walk with confidence.
- Pay attention to what is happening around you
- Carry a whistle, or personal alarm
- Remember that keys, pens, flashlights can be used to deter an attacker
- If attacked SCREAM anything as loudly as possible

Violence Situations on Incidents

Be alert to:

- Warning signs of potential violent situations such as intimidating, harassing, bullying, belligerent, or other inappropriate and aggressive behavior
- The appearance of a weapon at an incident – or the making of idle threats about using a weapon to harm someone
- Statements showing fascination with incidents of violence
- Direct threats of harm
- Statements indicating desperation
- Extreme changes in normal behaviors.

If violence is observed:

- Stay calm do not overreact, but do not ignore the situation
- Contact law enforcement and incident management immediately

Wellness Tips

Managing Stress

Stress is caused by how we respond to events, not by the events themselves. Each person therefore may respond differently to the same event. Not all stress can or needs to be controlled. We need positive high-energy stress because it gives us some motivation and challenge. What we need to learn to control is negative emotional and physical stress.

Stress Relievers:

- Relaxation – break the stress cycle by taking frequent breaks throughout the day, stretch, take a brief walk, practice deep breathing.
- Self-message –
 1. Base of the Neck: Put thumb on one side of the neck and fingers on the other side, with palm of hand facing the back of neck. Squeeze gently, moving up and down neck.
 2. Shoulders: With tips of fingers, rub in small circles from the end of shoulder to the base of neck.
 3. Headaches: Start at the center of forehead. With finger tips working in small circles and thumbs resting on cheek bones, work out along temples and the side of head to ears and back to center of forehead.
 4. Feet: Kick off shoes and use thumb to knead the bottoms of feet.
- Eat three nutritional meals a day.
- Eat healthy snacks like fruits and veggies.
- Exercise - be physical at least 20 minutes each day. This can be as simple as a brisk walk around camp.
- Get enough sleep – at least 7 hours of sleep each night helps your body to re-energize itself.



- **LAUGH** "He who laughs....lasts!"

Research has shown that laughter is one of the body's safety valves, a counter balance to tension. Laughter as with exercise, increases the level of good hormones in your system and decreases the levels of stress hormones.