

# Monthly Message

## From the Division Chief

May 2014 is Motorcycle Safety Month, National Bike Month, National Physical Fitness and Sports Month, and Clean Air Month. And, May 17th – 23rd is National Safe Boating Week.

There are just as many organized safety activities happening this month as there are work related activities within our division. Many of you are already involved with activities within these organizations mentioned above, and many of you are also involved in additional activities.

When you consider your activities along with your work place activities there are ever increasing time-demands and constraints placed upon us. With our busy lives it is important to take the time necessary to incorporate safety into all of our day-to-day activities.

And, with the seasonal change upon us, many of us look ahead with excitement to warmer weather, flowers in bloom, and more hours of daylight. Spring is a perfect time to keep moving with our many work and non-worked related activities so here are some safety considerations that all of us can use frequently:

- All motorists are reminded to safely “share the road” with motorcycles and bicyclists, and to be extra alert to help keep them safe. Motorcyclists and bicyclists are reminded to make themselves visible to other motorists.
- DES encourages everyone, regardless of ability, to lead a healthy lifestyle that includes regular physical activity and good nutrition. Walking is a great way to incorporate fitness and safety into your day by taking a work-break while being aware of your surroundings. So lace-up your sneakers and invite your coworkers, friends, and family to join you, and remember to take some drinking water with you.

- Many of us follow the long standing tradition of spring cleaning but also suffer with asthma and allergy symptoms. Dusting, vacuuming and cleaning indoor surfaces can help to eliminate many potential asthma and allergy triggers, but can also introduce new ones into our home environments. Also, the quality of the air we breathe outdoors can be especially troublesome for those of us with asthma and allergy symptoms so it is important to limit your spring activities to manage your triggers.

For more information visit:

Motorcycle Safety Month —  
<http://www.nhtsa.gov/Safety/Motorcycles>

National Bike Month —  
<http://bikeleague.org/programs/bikemonth>

National Physical Fitness and Sports Month —  
<http://www.fitness.gov/>

Clean Air Month —  
<http://www.lung.org/healthy-air/>

National Safe Boating Week —  
<http://www.safeboatingcouncil.org/>

Remember, one of the best ways to incorporate safety into work activities is to first become aware there may be a safety issue, address the problem adequately with properly trained person then practice the safe-practice “fix” until it becomes your habit.



Sincerely,  
Dean Messer, Chief  
Division of Environmental Services





**Heat Illness Safety Prevention — Heat awareness day is May 23, 2014.**

Heat is one of the leading weather-related killer in the United States, resulting in hundreds of fatalities each year. In the disastrous heat wave of 1980, more than 1,250 people died. In the heat wave of 1995 more than 700 deaths in the Chicago area were attributed to heat, making this the deadliest weather event in Chicago history.

In August 2003, a record heat wave in Europe claimed an estimated 50,000 lives.

North American summers are hot; most summers see heat waves in one or more parts of the United States. East of the Rockies, they tend to combine both high temperatures and high humidity, although some of the worst heat waves have been catastrophically dry.

**The Hazards of Excessive Heat**

During extremely hot and humid weather the body's ability to cool itself is affected. When the body heats too rapidly to cool itself properly, or when too much fluid or salt is lost through dehydration or sweating, body temperature rises and heat-related illnesses may develop.

Heat-related illnesses can range from heat cramps to heat exhaustion to more serious heat stroke. Heat stroke can result in death and requires immediate medical attention.

**Safety Tips for Adults**



**Slow down.** Reduce, eliminate or reschedule strenuous activities until the coolest time of the day. Children, seniors and anyone with health problems should stay in the coolest available place, not necessarily indoors.



**Dress for summer.** Wear lightweight, light-colored clothing to reflect heat and sunlight.



**Put less fuel on your inner fires.** Foods, like meat and other proteins that increase metabolic heat production also increase water loss.



**Drink plenty of water and decaffeinated fluids.**

Your body needs water to keep cool. Drink plenty of fluids even if you don't feel thirsty. Persons who have epilepsy or heart, kidney or liver disease, are on fluid restrictive diets or have a problem with fluid retention should consult a physician before increasing their consumption of fluids. Limit your intake of caffeinated beverages.



**During excessive heat periods, spend more time in air-conditioned places.**

Air conditioning in homes and other buildings markedly reduces danger from the heat. If you cannot afford an air conditioner, go to a library, store or other location with air conditioning for part of the day.



**Don't get too much sun.** Sunburn reduces your body's ability to dissipate heat.



**Do not take salt tablets unless specified by a physician.**

**Preparing for and Responding to Excessive Heat Events**

The Division of Management Services' Human Resources Office, Employee Health Services has posted additional heat illness safety prevention information on the aqueduct website at: <http://aquanet.water.ca.gov/healthservices/heat.cfm>

The National Weather Service's Excessive Heat Events Guidebook was developed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 2006, in collaboration with the National Weather Service, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Department of Homeland Security. This guidebook provides best practices for saving lives during heat waves in urban areas, and provides a menu of options that communities can use in developing their own mitigation plans.

For more information visit:

National Weather Service — <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/heat/index.shtml>

**Think Safety visit <http://swpsafety.water.ca.gov> for more information**

**DES Safety suggestion box [dessafety@water.ca.gov](mailto:dessafety@water.ca.gov)**