



## Stay Hydrated, My Friends

By Zach Nicoludis, agronomist, West Region | July 7, 2017



*Superintendents spend a great deal of time preventing turf from wilting; they must also help prevent the staff from wilting.*

**K**eeping turf healthy during the summer months often requires the maintenance staff to work long hours in heat and high humidity. Record-setting temperatures experienced during the recent heatwave in the Southwest underscore the need to remind employees about the importance of staying well-hydrated throughout the day.

The Department of Health and Human Services developed an [excellent resource](#) that can be used to educate employees on the dos and don'ts of staying hydrated while working in heat and high humidity. A few key recommendations from the document include:

- Under most circumstances, consuming adequate amounts of water and regular meals will be sufficient to stay hydrated and maintain a proper electrolyte balance.
- Hydrate before, during and after work. Drinking small amounts of water at short intervals throughout the day will replace fluids that are lost by sweating.

- Replenish salts lost through sweat by eating a balanced diet. Proper hydration requires that electrolytes be replaced too.
- Avoid consuming energy drinks while working during hot weather. Excessive caffeine combined with the stress of working in the heat can increase the strain placed on your body.

A variety of measures can be used to predict the potential risk to those working outdoors. Heat index uses air temperature adjusted by the relative humidity in a shaded area to determine how hot it actually feels. [Wet bulb globe temperature](#) is another measure; it accounts for temperature, humidity, wind speed, sun angle and solar radiation. The National Weather Service has developed a prototype [interactive map](#) that can be used to determine the wet bulb globe temperature simply by clicking on a location.

Employee health and safety should be the top priority at all times. Be sure to educate employees on how to stay properly hydrated while working outside during the dog days of summer.

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