MEMORANDUM

To: USC Faculty and Staff
From: James Gibson, PhD, MPH, Executive Director
Office of Environmental Health & Safety
Date: June 14, 2017
Subject: Heat Illness Prevention

As the days become warmer, it is important to take precautions to avoid heat-related illnesses, which occur when the body is unable to cool itself efficiently after exposure to heat stressors. Each year, hundreds of workers die in the U.S. from heat exhaustion and thousands more are affected by other heat-related illnesses.

Heat illness is a serious medical condition that can lead to death if the body’s core temperature is not cooled down promptly. Heat illness includes: heat cramps, heat rash, heat exhaustion and heat stroke. The risks are particularly high for individuals who work outdoors. Certain personal factors such as chronic health conditions, age, prescription medications, etc. can inhibit the body’s ability to cool itself during warm weather.

Learn to recognize some of the signs and symptoms of heat illness (i.e., weakness, nausea, vomiting, headache, moist/clammy skin, fever, dizziness, lethargy, feeling faint and muscle cramps).

Remember:

- If you work outside, pace yourself, and take frequent breaks in the shade or in air conditioned buildings.
- Drink plenty of water, even if you are not thirsty.
- Avoid large amounts of caffeine, alcohol, and sugary beverages.
- Minimize exposure to the sun, wear light, loose-fitting clothing, sunglasses, hat, and sunscreen.

If you or your staff may work outdoors or be exposed to the heat for extended periods, please post and review the following resources:

- [Heat Illness Prevention Fact Sheet (English)](#)
- [Heat Illness Prevention Fact Sheet (Spanish)](#)
- [Heat Illness Prevention for Supervisors](#)
- [Heat Stress Recognition and Prevention eLearning on USC TrojanLearn](#)

Note: If you are required to work outdoors, contact the Office of Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S) for additional training.

Please contact injuryprevention@usc.edu with any questions or concerns.