



# LAGNIAPPE

## MONTHLY EMPLOYEE NEWS



### Heat Stress

By: Jeremy Olivier, Lofton Safety Services



Heat stress is commonly associated with warm weather. It's true that warm weather increases the number of heat-stress injuries and illnesses, but it isn't the only cause. Heat stress can occur any time the surrounding temperature is elevated. Even if the weather is cool, you may work in warm areas, indoors or out. Be alert for conditions which could cause heat stress and take precautions to prevent it. Six main factors are involved in causing heat stress:

- temperature
- humidity
- movement of air
- radiant temperature of the surroundings
- clothing
- physical activity

There are several types of heat stress injuries. Some are mild, but others can quickly lead to life-threatening situations. Knowing what to look out for is important because the more serious heat stress conditions cause the victim to become disoriented and unaware of their condition. The major heat stress injuries and illnesses are:

**Heat rash** is caused by a hot, humid environment and plugged sweat glands. It is a bumpy red rash which itches severely. It is not life-threatening but is very annoying. Dry clothes that help sweat evaporate will reduce the chance of heat rash. Washing regularly and keeping the skin clean and dry will help prevent heat rash.

**Heat cramps** are painful muscle cramps caused by a loss of body salt through excessive sweating. To help prevent heat cramps, drink plenty of non-alcoholic, caffeine-free (caffeine is a diuretic) fluids while working in a hot environment. Anyone suffering from heat cramps should be watched carefully for signs of more

serious heat stress. If the cramps persist or other symptoms develop, seek medical attention immediately.

**Heat syncope** (pronounced "sin-co-pay") is sudden fainting caused by a reduced blood flow to the head. The victim's skin will be cool and moist and their pulse will be weak. Immediate medical attention is needed in the event of syncope.

**Heat exhaustion** results from inadequate salt and water intake and is a sign the body's cooling system is not working properly. The victim will sweat heavily, their skin will be cool and moist, their pulse weak, and they will seem tired, confused, clumsy, irritable or upset, they may breathe rapidly—even pant—and their vision may be blurred. The victim may strongly argue that they are okay even with these obvious symptoms. If you suspect heat exhaustion, don't let the victim talk you out of seeking immediate medical attention. The heat exhaustion will affect their ability to exercise good judgment. Until medical help arrives, try to cool the victim and offer sips of cool water as long as the victim is conscious. **Immediate medical attention is required.** Heat exhaustion can quickly lead to heat stroke.

**Heat stroke** is the deadliest of all heat stress conditions. It occurs when the body's cooling mechanism has shut down after extreme loss of salt and fluids. The body temperature will rise, the victim's skin is hot, red, and dry, their pulse fast, and they may complain of headache or dizziness. They will probably be weak, confused, and upset. Later stages of heat stroke cause a loss of consciousness and may lead to convulsions. In the event of heat stroke, **immediate active cooling** (cool, not cold water applied to whole body) can be lifesaving, and then seek immediate medical attention. Until help arrives, try to cool the victim and offer sips of cool water if the victim is conscious.

The most effective way to prevent heat stress illnesses is to have a healthy lifestyle. A combination of healthy diet, adequate rest, and proper hydration will go a long way toward increasing a person's resistance. Decreasing consumption of alcoholic beverages, sugary sodas, and energy drinks prior to, and during time spent outdoors is recommended.

When time is spent outdoors, it is preferable to relocate activities to shady areas if possible. Temporary structures like collapsible canopies are great for keeping out of direct sunlight. Portable fans are also helpful over long durations of exposure. In addition, take frequent breaks indoors to cool off and ensure adequate cooling.

### August 2025

#### No Holidays In August

Why is August the only month in the year that does NOT have any national holidays?

Unlike other months that commemorate significant historical events or figures, August does not have universally recognized holidays. August was most known as peak vacation month, leading families to focus on travel and leisure before school resumed in early September.

(The shift for an earlier school start in August occurred in the mid-1990s as a desire for more instructional time before standardized tests. This also allowed students to complete the first semester before the December holiday break.)

#### Open Enrollment

Open enrollment for major medical will be held this month. Be on the lookout for enrollment dates and materials via email/text soon. All employees eligible for this benefit are required to participate by enrolling or declining coverage. If you are currently enrolled and do not want to make changes to coverage, your benefits will automatically renew for 10/1/2025 (renewal date).

STAY CONNECTED





# Celebrating the Life of Laurence Graffeo

By: Glenda Lofton, Ph.D.

This past month, our family received the devastating news of the sudden passing of Laurence Graffeo, the brother to my beloved daughter-in-law Michelle. Laurence lived his life as a testament to the importance of family, friendship, and loving life. He'd been in foster homes for much of his childhood, carrying a weight no young person should. When Bart and Michelle got married back in '92, they took Laurence in to live with them. Picture it, Bart and Michelle, newly married, barely in their twenties, and suddenly they have a teenager in the house. It may not have been perfect, but he was loved.

Later, Laurence briefly attended Southeastern Louisiana University before embarking on a career as a mechanic. He was brilliant! He had a high IQ, and mechanically gifted - he could fix anything! Laurence quickly earned a reputation for his exceptional skills and his willingness to help others. He proudly served in the Louisiana National Guard, where he excelled in marksmanship and dedicated himself to the service of his state and country.

Laurence had an uncanny ability to forge life-long friendships wherever he went. With a unique gift of gab, he could talk to anyone, anywhere, and make them feel like family. Once you befriended Laurence, you had a friend for life. His warmth, generosity, and infectious sense of humor endeared him to everyone he met. At our LSU tailgates on campus, Laurence would often stay behind during the game to "hold down the fort". When we came back, it was not unusual for Laurence to have a group of new friends he had just met, sharing food and beer...and loving every minute of it!

For Laurence, his greatest joy came from spending time with his family, creating lasting memories filled with laughter and love. Tommy and I enjoyed the times Laurence joined us on family trips. About three years ago, we experienced a KISS cruise with Bart, Michelle, Laurence and some of their friends. Laurence went out of his way to make sure that we had a great time, introducing us to band members and new friends. Whether it was a family gathering or a simple day spent together by the pool, Laurence always made sure to make every moment count.

Laurence's love for cars, dogs, and rock music was well known. He immersed himself fully in these passions, often strumming his guitar with enthusiasm and sharing his love of music with those around him. In his free time, he spent most of his day, by the pool, with a beer, and surrounded by his dogs - who loved him unconditionally. He also loved his niece and nephew unconditionally. He often joked that he would "take care" of anyone that messed



with Via and spent many hours with Zach teaching him how to play guitar, and the basics on how to fix things.

Laurence leaves behind a legacy of loyalty, laughter, friendship, and love. His life was a vibrant tapestry woven with hardship, forgiveness and adventure, defined by the deep bonds he made with family and friends. He showed those around him how to live fully, cherishing the moments that matter most.

In a fast-paced world, it's easy to forget to pause and appreciate those who stand by us, offering support and love unconditionally. These connections, which Laurence embodied, are what enrich our lives and guide us through life's highs and lows.

Tommy's belief that "Life Is a Temporary Assignment" reminds us to seek joy and meaning in each day, knowing our paths may be uncertain but the love we nurture endures. Though it's hard to find comfort in loss, Laurence's journey reflects a greater plan, where God sends us reminders that each person has a unique purpose. Every experience, no matter how challenging, shapes and guides us closer to those we hold dear.

Laurence touched many lives, and his memory calls us to maintain those meaningful bonds. May we honor him by celebrating the connections that unite us, drawing strength from

shared moments--whether over a beer or through tears. His legacy inspires us to be kinder, more compassionate, and ever grateful for the love that lights our way.

