

FSIS Employee Training

Body Protection (Heat Stress) – Neck Cooling Scarf

INSTRUCTIONS

This document provides training on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for body protection (heat stress) as required by Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulation 29 CFR 1910.132, PPE General Requirements. After reading, and prior to performing work that requires this type of PPE, your supervisor may ask you to demonstrate your understanding of the information in this handout, such as your ability to properly use the PPE. You must also follow any specific manufacturer instructions on the use and care of the PPE.

PPE SELECTION

- When used in warm or hot environments, neck cooling scarves can help reduce the risk of heat stress related illnesses.
- Neck cooling scarves contain special materials (e.g. cooling crystals) that become cool by being soaked in cold water.
- When the cooling scarf contacts the neck, it can help reduce body heat by cooling the blood in the neck that then circulates through the body.
- There is no specific OSHA standard that requires the use of cooling scarves. FSIS provides cooling scarves as one part of a heat stress prevention program.



Neck Cooling Scarf
FSIS-68

WHERE/WHEN

- Neck cooling scarves are not mandatory but may be used for comfort in warm or hot work environments where FSIS inspectors may be exposed to high heat and humidity.
- Cooling scarves should be used in conjunction with other heat stress protection measures, especially in very hot or humid weather, or during prolonged exposure. Additional precautions include but are not limited to taking breaks in an air-conditioned location, drinking plenty of liquids, limiting exposure to direct sunlight, and using a “buddy system” to watch for signs of heat-related illness.

PROPER USE

- Prior to using a cooling scarf, soak it in clean, cold, tap water for 10-20 minutes.
- Wrap the scarf around the neck and tie it comfortably. Do not secure it with a safety pin or sharp object.
- The scarf should have direct contact with the skin of the neck but should not be tight or limit neck movement.
- When the scarf feels like it is no longer cooling, it should be removed from the neck.
- Cooling scarves can be reused multiple times. To reactivate, soak in cold water for 10-20 minutes.
- Do not freeze the scarf, put it in ice water, or wrap it in ice.
- The suspension system must be made by the same manufacturer as the helmet and designed for the correct model.

LIMITATIONS

- Cooling scarves do not reduce heat or humidity in the air, nor do they prevent dehydration.
- In very humid environments, cooling scarfs may not be as effective and should be changed out more frequently.
- If skin becomes irritated, discontinue use of the scarf and wash the skin with mild soap and water.

CARE AND MAINTENANCE

- Inspect scarf after each use to check for signs of wear, tears and soiling. If the scarf is damaged, dispose of it in the regular trash.
- To clean, first hang the cooling scarf in open air until it is dry. Then, hand wash using mild soap, rinse quickly and hang to air dry. Do not use bleach or harsh detergents.
- Store in a clean, dry location. Do not store cooling scarves in a refrigerator or freezer.

FSIS PPE ORDERING INFORMATION

- FSIS catalog number: FSIS-68: Bag of 12 neck cooling scarves

QUESTIONS?

For more information on this topic, please contact your Occupational Safety and Health Specialist. Contact information can be found on the FSIS Safety site at www.tinyurl.com/FSIS-ESHG.