

# 2026 HIPP stand-up talks



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**L**ast month, I submitted a request for information to the USPS, seeking copies of all Heat Illness Prevention Program (HIPP) stand-up talk materials prepared for the 2026 heat season.

I received the information earlier this week and have since been reviewing the talks and doing some additional research.

In total there were 22 stand-up talks provided. Each of them is identified by number. Some of them have very useful information and others fall short of that. However, I appreciate the USPS continuing to improve the material. I think of where we started when we lost John Watzlawick

to the heat in July of 2012.

Stand Up Talk #2044 is titled “Heat Stress for Supervisors,” which includes the following comment:

The following recommendations should be followed by supervisors to provide assistance to their employees:

Train yourself - Train your employees - Monitor the weather  
- Have a plan.

Heat Stroke is a medical emergency.

If medical attention is needed, call 911 and send them to the employee’s location, and meet the employee either at the employee’s location or at the hospital. You should go to the employee’s location, and arrange for first aid assistance as necessary, if the employee is experiencing signs of heat exhaustion, such as:

Heavy sweating; Extreme weakness or fatigue; Dizziness, confusion; Nausea; Clammy, moist skin; Pale or flushed complexion; Muscle cramps; Slightly elevated body temperature; Fast and shallow breathing

There are numerous references to learning the signs and symptoms of heat illness such as the above. It is important that we all learn those symptoms so that we may recognize what is happening to us or to a co-worker, and can promptly respond before it’s too late.

Many of the talks contain tips that we should read, understand and follow. One has a list of things to avoid. There are many cautionary reminders to properly hydrate before you feel thirsty, because once you are, you may already be in trouble.

**There is one additional subject I want to touch on** that appears in three of the talks. In my May 2016 col-

umn, I referenced a report from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), titled 2013-143 “Preventing Heat Related Illness or Death of Outdoor Workers.” It states:

[The report] presented examples of other factors that may contribute to heat illness. It highlights one case in which an outdoor worker who died from the heat was on medication that had a warning about exposure to heat, and it offers that the medication could have possibly interfered with body temperature regulation.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recommends that reading the product label is the most important part of taking care of yourself or your family when using over-the-counter (OTC) medicines (available without a prescription). This is especially true because many OTC medicines are taken without first seeing a doctor about them.

Furthermore, if your physician prescribes you any medication, we encourage you to discuss how the medication might affect you while performing your letter carrier duties in extreme heat. In some cases, your doctor may want to limit your exposure to the heat while you are on the medication. If so, have your doctor provide you with these directions in writing so that you can protect yourself from unenlightened managers who would put you in harm’s way just to make budget.

We need your help to protect you from harm, so communicate with your local union leadership, your national business agent or, if necessary, by contacting our office.

I therefore take your attention to the following stand-up talks that make reference to medications you may be taking:

- **2064:** Talk with your doctor about medications you are taking and how they may affect your heat tolerance.
- **2074 and 2079:** Medication—If you are taking medication or following a low-sodium diet, you need to be especially careful when working in hot environments. Diuretics (“water pills”) for high blood pressure or fluid retention cause you to lose water and sometimes electrolytes (e.g., potassium). If you are taking medications and working in a very hot environment, pay attention to any feelings of weakness, dizziness or nausea, and consult your health care provider.

**I will be sending these stand-up talks to all of our national business agents and request that they share this information with you.** These stand-up talks and any additional HIPP information will be posted on my safety page in the extreme weather section on [nalc.org](http://nalc.org).

Keep an eye on each other.