

North Country National Scenic Trail  
“TAILGATE SAFETY SERIES”



## HYDRATION

- Maintaining body fluids is essential for sweating—you must hydrate before, during, and after work
- Before beginning trail work you should drink one or two cups of water, juice, or a sport drink. Avoid excess caffeine, it hastens fluid loss in the urine
- When engaged in arduous trail work, or when working in hot environments, drink at least one quart of fluid per hour
- Providing a *portion* of fluid replacement with a carbohydrate/electrolyte sport beverage will help retain fluids and maintain energy and electrolyte levels—however, be sure to alternate sports drinks with plain water
- Continue drinking after work to replace fluid losses—thirst always underestimates fluid needs, so drink more than you think is necessary
- Rehydration is enhanced when fluids contain sodium and potassium, or when foods with these electrolytes are consumed along with the fluid
- Make potassium-rich foods like bananas and citrus fruits a regular part of your diet, and drink lots of lemonade, orange juice, or tomato juice
- Limit the amount of caffeine drinks such as coffee and colas because caffeine increases fluid loss. Avoid alcoholic drinks—they also cause dehydration
- You can assess your hydration by observing the volume, color, and concentration of your urine. Low volumes of dark, concentrated urine, or painful urination, indicate a serious need for rehydration. Other signs of dehydration include rapid heart rate, weakness, excessive fatigue, and dizziness

- Rapid loss of several pounds of body weight is a certain sign of dehydration. Rehydrate before returning to work. Continuing to work in a dehydrated state can lead to serious consequences, including heat stroke, muscle breakdown, and kidney failure

References:

Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation operations, Interagency, [www.nifc.gov/references/index.html](http://www.nifc.gov/references/index.html)  
Fitness and Work Capacity—Second Edition  
Six Minutes for Safety, [http://www.nifc.gov/sixminutes/dsp\\_sixminutes.php](http://www.nifc.gov/sixminutes/dsp_sixminutes.php)