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DO NOT STAY THIRSTY, MY FRIENDS

The mercury is rising and the sweat is beginning to fall. Summer is upon us. This means many things in the air show industry: decreased engine performance, higher density altitude, hazy horizons, afternoon thunderstorms and more. Warmer temperatures also mean that air show performers and ground personnel alike need to be concerned about hydration.

Water makes up approximately 60 percent of the human body mass and helps to control and regulate many critical functions within the body. One of the most important of these functions as it pertains to aviation is the delivery of blood to the many muscles and organs of the body. Oxygen-carrying red blood cells travel through the body in plasma which is 92 percent water. As the body's hydration drops, the plasma congeals and slows the delivery of oxygen to the muscles making your body fatigue faster. The decreased oxygen delivery affects the brain similarly -- but less acutely -- as alcohol, impairing and slowing reaction times.

Fortunately, we receive many early indicators that dehydration is imminent. Irritability, reduced and dark yellow urine, and a dry mouth are all warning signs that can tip you off to rehydrate yourself.

Most events are very generous with the accessibility of water to performers, but it is important to remember that keeping parking attendants, ground operations personnel and concessions workers hydrated is also important to a safe and incident-free air show.