



# Tailgate Safety Training for Landscaping and Horticultural Services

Agricultural Safety Program, 590 Woody Hayes Drive, Columbus, OH 43210

## Stress Management

**Objective: Manage stress in the workplace.**

### *How to Use This Module*

Learning to manage stress can improve mental and physical health. For this module:

- Review the information below on the warning signs of and ways to manage and reduce stress.
- Ask co-workers and supervisors to identify specific stress factors in your workplace.
- Discuss how to eliminate or reduce those stress factors.
- Review the important points.
- Take the True/False quiz to check your learning.

## Background

Green industry service businesses are stressful occupations. For example, seasonal workloads can vary greatly. Seasonal demands lead to long work hours, and those long hours can be a source of stress. Working outdoors in the weather can also add stress. Heat, cold, humidity, precipitation, and winds can all lead to stress. Work delays caused by bad weather can add more stress, especially during peak seasonal workloads.

It is important to know how to manage stress levels and to reduce the effects of unwanted stress. One way to manage stress is to talk to other people. This support might come from family, church members, friends, or other workers. There are also several organized self-help groups that offer emotional support and practical help. Consult a family doctor, mental health professional, or religious leader for additional help.

## Three Ways to Help Manage Stress

- Know the warning signs of stress and monitor stress levels.
- Manage mental and physical health.
- Change your reaction to stressful events.

## Stress Can Be Reduced by Making Lifestyle Changes

- Keep a positive attitude.
- Accept that stress is a part of life.
- Clearly define home and work responsibilities.
- Manage time.
- Set realistic goals.
- Learn to relax. Employees who take mid-morning and afternoon breaks will be able to get more accomplished.
- Eat well-balanced meals.
- Develop an exercise program.

Eat an adequate and nutritious breakfast each day. A nutritious breakfast should include protein plus fresh fruit and vegetables. Hunger can make people less able to cope with stress. High blood pressure and cholesterol levels increase the chances of a stroke and heart attack.

Caffeine (coffee, tea, soft drinks, and some drugs) stimulates the nervous system and can cause nervousness and tension. If you tend to be tense or nervous, reduce your consumption of caffeine. Alcohol and drugs can be addictive and may reduce ability to cope with stress.

A basic exercise program, in addition to daily work, is likely to lessen stress. Exercise will produce a healthier heart, lungs, and arteries and will elevate your mood and encourage a healthy self-concept. Have a complete medical exam before beginning an exercise program.

Finally, know the warning signs of stress-related problems and seek help.

## Early Warning Signs of Stress-Related Problems

- Moodiness
- Withdrawing from responsibility
- Trouble falling asleep
- Poor emotional control
- Severe feelings of helplessness and dependency
- Chronic fatigue and susceptibility to illness
- Marked change in appetite or sex drive

If any of these problems persist, consult a doctor.

## Review These Important Points

- Stress can be managed.
- Seek help when a problem is discovered.
- A positive attitude makes a difference.
- Eat a well-balanced diet.

## About These Modules

The author team for the training modules in the landscape and horticultural tailgate training series includes Dee Jepsen, Program Director, Agricultural Safety and Health, Ohio State University Extension; Michael Wonacott, Research Specialist, Vocational Education; Peter Ling, Greenhouse Specialist; and Thomas Bean, Agricultural Safety Specialist. Modules were developed with funding from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, Grant Number 46E3-HT09.

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Answer Key: 1 = T, 2 = T, 3 = F, 4 = F, 5 = T.

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*Name* \_\_\_\_\_

### True or False?

1. Eating a well-balanced diet of protein plus fruits and vegetables can help control stress. T F
2. Exercise can help manage stress. T F
3. Setting high goals that are hard to achieve helps reduce stress. T F
4. Stress must be completely eliminated from a worker's life to be active and productive. T F
5. Seek help for stress management before stress gets out of control. T F