PREVENTING HEAT STRESS AFLOAT

Heat stress is a potential problem aboard Navy ships. Whether in port or underway, conditions of high heat and humidity may be encountered in many shipboard spaces such as engineering spaces, galleys, sculleries, and laundries, and on weather decks and during flight deck operations, exercises and drills in hot climates. NAVSEA is evaluating an ice vest as a new means of maintaining body temperature while sailors work in hot shipboard environments.

Ice vests were approved for fire fighting by NAVSEA in 1989. An ice vest is worn with a camelback, the backpack shown on two sailors in the picture at right. The camelback provides a hands-free source of drinking water.

The nine-pound ice vest contains flash frozen gel packs. Three sets are usually worn in each vest. The gel packs are changed every two hours to sustain their cooling capacity. Ice vests are currently being field tested in the engine room and laundry of USS CONSTELLATION and on the flight deck and the hangar bay of USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN.