

HEAT STRESS GUIDELINES

Preventing Heat Illness

1. Supply adequate water and encourage workers who work in hot weather to drink regularly, even when not thirsty. A small amount of water every 15 minutes is recommended rather than a large amount after hours of sweating.
2. Learn the signs and symptoms of heat-related illness.
3. Inform workers they should avoid alcohol or drinks with caffeine before or during work in hot weather.
4. Try to do the heaviest work during the cooler parts of the day.
5. Adjusting to work in heat takes time. Allow workers to acclimatize. Start slower and work up to your normal pace.
6. Wear lightweight, loose-fitting, light-colored, breathable (e.g. cotton) clothing and a hat.
7. Allow workers to take regular breaks from the sun. Loosen or remove clothing that restricts cooling.
8. Watch workers for symptoms of heat-related illness. This is especially important for non-acclimatized workers, those returning from vacations and for all workers during heat-wave events.
9. If exertion causes someone's heart to pound or makes them gasp for breath, become lightheaded, confused, weak or faint, they should STOP all activity and get into a cool area or at least into the shade, and rest.

Heat Stroke and Heat Exhaustion

The two major heat-related illnesses are heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Heat exhaustion, if untreated, may progress to deadly heat stroke. **Heat stroke is very dangerous and frequently fatal.**

If workers show symptoms, *always take this seriously* and have them take a break and cool down before returning to work. *Stay with them.* If symptoms worsen or the worker does not recover within about 15 minutes, call 911 and have them transported and medically evaluated. **Do not delay transport.**

How to Tell the Difference Between Heat Stroke or Heat Exhaustion

1. The telling difference is mental confusion or disorientation in ALL heat stroke victims.
2. You can ask these 3 questions: What is your name? What day is this? Where are we?
3. If a worker can't answer these questions, assume it is heat stroke.

Heat Stress Assessment

To assess whether employees will be susceptible to heat stress on the job, supervisors will evaluate the job task/location by considering asking the following questions.

1. Does the worksite have temperature extremes (above 85 degrees in higher humidity, above 90-95 degrees in lower humidity) that may cause heat stress?
2. Do employees do heavy labor or wear heavy protective clothing? (Increases heat stress conditions).
3. Do employees have access to adequate drinking water at all times?
4. Are employees allowed work breaks during prolonged heavy labor?
5. Do workers have access to shade during breaks?
6. Have employees been trained on the symptoms of heat-related illness (heat exhaustion and heat stroke)?
7. Are employees trained on first aid measures for heat-related illness?

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What are the symptoms of heat exhaustion and heat stroke?

Heat Exhaustion	Heat Stroke (medical emergency)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heavy sweating • Exhaustion, weakness • Fainting / Lightheadedness • Paleness • Headache • Clumsiness, dizziness • Nausea or vomiting • Irritability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sweating may or may not be present • Red or flushed, hot dry skin • Any symptom of heat exhaustion but more severe • Confusion / Bizarre behavior • Convulsions before or during cooling • Collapse • Panting/rapid breathing • Rapid, weak pulse • Note: May resemble a heart attack

What do you do if someone is suffering from heat exhaustion or heat stroke?

Heat Exhaustion	Heat Stroke (medical emergency)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move the worker to a cool, shaded area to rest; do not leave them alone. • Loosen and remove heavy clothing that restricts evaporative cooling. • Give cool water to drink, about a cup every 15 minutes. • Fan the worker, spray with cool water, or apply a wet cloth to their skin to increase evaporative cooling. • Recovery should be rapid. Call 911 if they do not feel better in a few minutes. • Do not further expose the worker to heat that day. Have them rest and continue to drink cool water or electrolyte drinks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get medical help immediately, call 911 and transport as soon as possible. • Move the worker to a cool, shaded area and remove clothing that restricts cooling. • Seconds count – Cool the worker rapidly using whatever methods you can. For example, immerse the worker in a tub of cool water; place the worker in a cool shower; spray the worker with cool water from a garden hose; sponge the worker with cool water; or, if the humidity is low, wrap the worker in a cool, wet sheet and fan them vigorously. Continue cooling until medical help arrives. • If emergency medical personnel are delayed, call the hospital emergency room for further instruction. • Do not give the worker water to drink until instructed by medical personnel.