

PROTECTING WORKERS FROM HEAT STRESS

Risk Factors for Heat Illness

- High temperature and humidity, direct sun exposure, no breeze or wind
- Physical labor
- Lack of exposure to hot workplaces
- Low liquid intake

Symptoms

Symptoms of Heat Exhaustion

- Headache, dizziness, or fainting
- Weakness and wet skin
- Irritability or confusion
- Thirst, nausea, or vomiting

Symptoms of Heat Stroke

- May be confused, unable to think clearly, pass out, collapse, or have seizures
- Confusion, loss of consciousness, collapse, or seizures
- Lack of sweat and the body's trunk is hot to the touch

How to Prevent Heat Illness

- Establish a heat illness prevention program
- Provide training about the hazards leading to heat stress and how to prevent them
- Provide cool water close to the work area (each person should have at least one pint of water per hour)
- Modify work schedules with frequent rest periods and water breaks in the shade
- Gradually increase workloads allowing more frequent breaks for workers new to the heat or those that have been away from work
- Designate a responsible person to monitor conditions and co-workers
- Consider protective clothing that provides cooling

How to Protect Workers

- Know signs/symptoms of heat illnesses; monitor yourself; use a buddy system
- Block out direct sun and other heat sources
- Drink plenty of fluids; drink often and BEFORE you are thirsty; drink water every 15 minutes
- Avoid beverages containing alcohol or caffeine
- Wear lightweight, light colored, loose-fitting clothes

What to Do When a Worker is Ill from the Heat

- Move the worker to a cooler/shaded area
- Remove outer clothing
- Fan and mist the worker with water; apply ice (ice bags or ice towels)
- Provide cool drinking water, if able to drink (IF THE WORKER IS NOT ALERT or seems confused, this may be a heat stroke and you should CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY and apply ice as soon as possible)