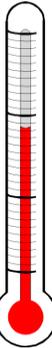




Working in the Heat

Why It Matters...

- The combination of heat, humidity, and human labor can be deadly.
- Every year thousands of workers end up in the emergency room suffering from heat-related illness—and some of them end up dying.
- By training ourselves to understand heat hazards and how to take the proper precautions to prevent heat-related illness we will not only protect our health, it will keep us on the job, even on the hottest days.



Health risks rise along with the mercury. Those who must work outdoors in high temperatures - or indoors where processes or inadequate air-conditioning create a steamy hot environment - see a different side of summertime than most. Because heat can cause a range of ailments from discomfort to death, it's essential that both workers, and their supervisors, understand the risks and how to protect against them. That means with summer on your doorstep and the temperatures already starting to soar, this is the right time to discuss some "hot" safety training. You'll want to understand the possible health hazards of working in the heat, along with precautions for avoiding illness and basic first aid if a co-worker succumbs to the heat.

Heed these hot tips for keeping everyone cool.

- Consider your physical fitness to work in a hot environment.
- Work in pairs to reduce stress and so that they you can keep an eye on each other's physical condition.
- Create and maintain easy access to a supply of safe drinking water and encourage each other to drink plenty of water throughout the day.
- Avoid scheduling or performing the heaviest work on the hottest days or at the hottest time of the day.
- Alternate work and rest periods in very hot weather, making sure everyone has a cool, shady place to take breaks.
- Monitor temperatures and coworker responses on a regular basis.
- Learn to recognize and treat the signs of heat-related illness.

Stress the signs and treatment of heat-related illness. Be sure to discuss this basic information in your morning tailgate discussions regarding heat hazards and first-aid:



- **Heat stress** is a common reaction to high temperatures, especially when accompanied by strenuous activity. Symptoms include thirst, fatigue, dizziness, and even difficulty seeing.
 - *What to do:* Take a break in a cool place and drink cool water or juice.
- **Heat cramps** are painful muscle spasms in arms, legs, or intestines that are caused by losing salt while sweating.
 - *What to do:* Cool down and drink water or juice. Also make sure the diet includes foods that will replace lost salt.
- **Heat exhaustion** can make a person feel weak and possibly dizzy and/or nauseous. Other symptoms include chills, clammy skin, and profuse sweating.
 - *What to do:* Rest in a cool spot (preferably with feet slightly elevated) and drink plenty of fluids. If condition doesn't soon improve, seek medical attention. Take it easy for a few days following an incident, especially if excessive heat continues to be a work factor, and reduce the pace of activity.
- **Heatstroke** is the most serious type of heat-related sickness and is, in fact, life threatening. Emergency medical attention is required. A victim of a heatstroke stops sweating, causing the body to overheat. Symptoms include hot and flushed skin, poor coordination, and confusion, possibly followed by loss of consciousness.
 - *What to do:* **CALL 9-1-1** – While waiting for the EMTs to arrive, move the person to a cool place, sponge with cold water, apply ice packs or cold drink cans, or immerse in cold water. Offer drinking water only if the person is conscious.

Are you prepared to offer first aid to someone suffering from a heat-related illness?

Where can I get more information?

You can contact you office HSE Representative or Regional HSE Manager.