



Toolbox Talk: Safety Tips for Working in the Heat

While we think of heat stress primarily in the summertime, employees can experience heat stress throughout the year. We know that heavy physical activity can play a large role in increased heat stress. Our goal is to prevent any heat related illnesses by taking a few steps to keep our core temperature from rising too much.

So, what is heat stress and how can we help mitigate it?

What Is Heat Stress?

Heat stress occurs when the body is unable to cool itself by sweating. Heat stress can lead to heat exhaustion or heat stroke.

Symptoms of Heat Exhaustion	Symptoms of Heat Stroke
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Headache, dizziness, lightheadedness, or fainting.• Weakness and moist skin.• Mood changes, irritability, or confusion.• Nausea or vomiting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dry, hot skin with no sweating.• Mental confusion or loss of consciousness.• Seizures or convulsions.• May be fatal.

Preventing Heat Stress

- Know the signs and symptoms of heat-related illness.
- Block out the sun or other heat sources.
- Use fans or air conditioning units.
- In high heat, drink one cup of water every 15 minutes.
- Wear lightweight, light-colored, and loose-fitting clothes.
- Avoid alcohol, caffeinated drinks, and heavy meals.



- Wear sunscreen of SPF 30 or greater and reapply it every two hours.

Staying Hydrated

Staying hydrated during the summer months is very important. Here are some tips:

- Drink water or sports drinks.
- Eat fruits and vegetables.
- Avoid sodas and cola.

Drinking plenty of water helps avoid heat cramps, headaches, heat exhaustion, and low blood pressure.

Treating Heat-Related Illness

Seek immediate medical attention; call 911. While waiting for medical attention:

- Move employee to cool shaded area.
- Loosen or remove heavy clothing.
- Provide cool drinking water.
- Fan and mist person with water.

If you start to have muscle spasms, heavy sweating, dizziness, or fatigue, move to a cool location, and notify your supervisor. If your symptoms continue, call 911.

Personal risk factors impact how heat affects employees. Considerations may be levels of physical fitness, certain medications, or medical conditions. If you have more specific questions, contact your local doctor or physician.