

Protecting Workers from Heat Stress

Heat Illness

Exposure to heat can cause illness and death. The most serious heat illness is heat stroke. Other heat illnesses, such as heat exhaustion, heat cramps and heat rash, should also be avoided.

There are precautions that can be taken any time temperatures are high and the job involves physical work.

Risk Factors for Heat Illness

- High temperature and humidity, direct sun exposure, no breeze or wind
- Heavy physical labor
- No recent exposure to hot workplaces
- Low liquid intake
- Waterproof clothing

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 (fits)
- May stop sweating

To Prevent Heat Illness:

- Establish a complete heat illness prevention program.
- Provide training about the hazards leading to heat stress and how to prevent them.
- Provide a lot of cool water to workers close to the work area. At least one pint of water per hour is needed.



U.S. Department of Labor



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