

PROTECTING YOUR WORKERS FROM HEAT-RELATED ILLNESSES



What is heat-related illness?

Heat exposure can cause illness and death. The most serious type of heat-related illness is heatstroke. Other heat-related illnesses include heat exhaustion, heat cramps and heat rash. Take precautions if your workers perform physical work in high temperatures.

Risk factors

- Direct sun exposure
- Heavy physical labor
- High temperature and humidity
- Low liquid intake
- No breeze or wind
- No previous experience in hot workplaces
- Waterproof clothing

Symptoms of heat exhaustion and heatstroke

- Headache, dizziness or fainting
- Weakness
- Irritability or confusion
- Unable to think clearly
- Thirst, nausea or vomiting
- Collapsing, unconsciousness or seizures
- No longer sweating

Workers at risk of heat stress should:

- Know the signs and symptoms of heat-related illnesses.
- Use a buddy system.
- Stay out of direct sunlight if possible.
- Drink water every 15 minutes and avoid alcohol and caffeine.
- Wear lightweight, light-colored and loose-fitting clothing.

What to do when a worker is suffering from heat stress

- Call a supervisor. If the supervisor is not available, call 911.
- Move the worker to a cooler or shaded area. Remove outer clothing.
- Fan and mist the worker with water. Apply ice and give them cool drinking water if they can drink.
- Have someone stay with the worker until help arrives.

If the worker is not alert or seems confused, they may have heatstroke. **Call 911 immediately** and apply ice as soon as possible.

How to prevent heat-related illnesses

- Offer training about the hazards leading to heat stress.
- Provide cool water near the work area. Workers need at least one pint of water per hour.
- Modify work schedules to include frequent rest periods with water breaks in shaded or air-conditioned areas.
- Help your workers adapt to working in the heat. Gradually increase workloads and allow more breaks for workers new to the heat and those that have been away from work.
- Designate a responsible person to monitor conditions and protect those who are at risk of heat stress.
- Use protective clothing that provides cooling.

For more information,
call Sanford OccMed at (888) 600-2378.

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