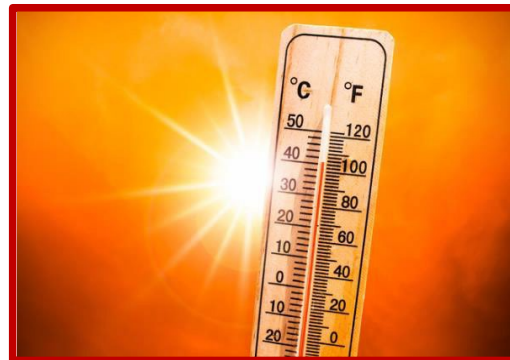




## Safety Talk Heat-Related Illness

Any worker exposed to hot and humid conditions is at risk of heat related illness especially those employees that are involved in heavy work activities or using bulky protective clothing and equipment. Some workers might be at greater risk than others if they have not built up a tolerance to hot conditions including new workers, temporary workers, or those returning to work after extended time off.

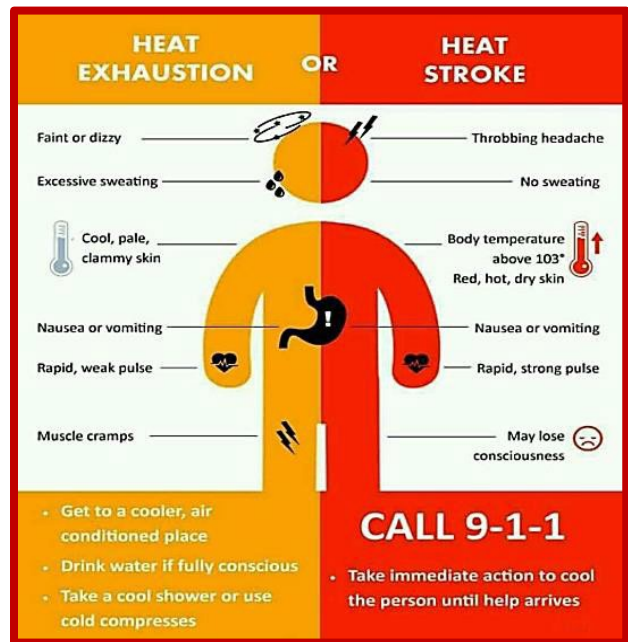


Heat stress occurs during warm weather when the body's normal method of cooling itself by perspiring or sweating becomes more difficult. As the air temperature increases, a person's body loses moisture rapidly. When the humidity becomes higher, perspiration will not evaporate as quickly which prevents the body from releasing heat as fast as it normally would causing various levels of heat stress. Also, do not be fooled by the outside temperature as heat related illnesses/injuries can occur during cooler weather as well depending upon what the person is wearing, what task(s) they are accomplishing, and how long they're doing the task(s).

The below Safety Tips are intended to raise employee general awareness on heat related hazards and illnesses.

- **Proper Hydration.** Water is arguably the best hydrating beverage. However, sports/electrolytic beverages (i.e., Gatorade and Power Aid) are also acceptable. Consider also adding a slice of lemon to water. It can add some flavor and supply electrolytes to the body.
  1. **Ensure drinking water is at the work location. Ice is required from May 1<sup>st</sup> to October 31<sup>st</sup> to keep the water cool.**
  2. **Rotate water breaks into the daily work plan if possible.**
  3. **Avoid soda or caffeinated beverages (Red Bull etc.).** These types of liquids offer minimal hydration and pulls water from the body which increases urine output. This includes avoiding carbonated sodas and sugary drinks. Anything with caffeine is a diuretic and should be avoided.
  4. **Prepare a proper lunch and snacks.** Select items that have high moisture/water content such as fruits and vegetables. This can add water into your system. Stay clear of junk food with high fat, sugar and salt content as this pulls water from other parts of your body to help with digestion. This increases dehydration.
- **Schedule work during cooler parts of the day when possible.**
- **Assess your work location.** Look for shaded areas or areas that can be used during break times.
- **Bring your own shade.** If there are no shaded areas, use vehicles with air conditioning to provide relief from the heat.
- **Use a scheduling rotation system.** Rotate employees out of the heat within a certain time. For example: rotate one employee to a rest/shaded area for 10-15 minutes every hour – this keeps work moving but also keeps the workforce safe, healthy, and hydrated.

- **Look out for one another.** If you notice a fellow employee not drinking water or not taking their breaks remind them to do so. If you notice an employee showing signs of heat related illness, get them to a cooler environment immediately and monitor them closely.
- **Review the signs/symptoms of heat related illnesses.** The usual progress is:
  1. Heat Cramps
  2. Heat Exhaustion
  3. Heat Stroke
 ✓ Note: Heat Syncope (fainting -loss of consciousness) - can occur at any time during one of the above heat related situations.
- **Review and administer the first aid treatment for heat related illnesses if needed.**
- **Contact 911 if necessary.** Especially if an employee loses consciousness for any reason.



#### Other Heat Related Safety Concerns:

- **Sun Burn.** Is a radiation burn caused by exposure to the sun. Some extreme cases could lead to swelling, skin blisters, fever, and headaches.
  - Prevention is the key – to prevent sunburn – use a sunscreen of SPF 30 or higher.
- **Heat Rash.** Is described as a cluster of red pimples or small blisters that appear anywhere on the body.
  - To treat heat rash, use methods to keep the affected area dry as much as possible. Consider wearing clothing that consists of lighter weight or breathable material that allows heat and moisture to escape easily.

**Awareness and preparation are key to keeping employees safe and healthy. The effects of dehydration and heat related illnesses typically occurs over the course of time but can sneak up on a person. It can turn quickly into an intense life-threatening emergency. Additionally, dehydration and heat related emergencies do not solely occur at work. They can also occur during non-work times when employees are around their homes or participating in a leisure activity. Remember..... Stay Hydrated, Stay Cool, and Stay Safe!**