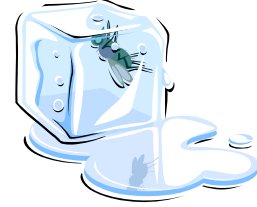


Protect Yourself from Heat Stress

Chill Out!



Heat is a serious hazard in construction. Your body builds up heat when you work and sweats to get rid of extra heat. But sometimes — say, if you are up on a roof, pouring hot asphalt, or lifting heavy loads — your body may not cool off fast enough. Anyone can suffer a heat illness, but by taking a few simple precautions and with common sense, you can avoid heat illnesses.

The Risk of Heat Stress

Your risk of heat stress depends on many things. These include your physical condition, the weather (temperature, humidity), how much clothing you have on, how fast you must move or how much weight you must lift, if you are near a fan or there is a breeze, or if you are in the sun. Too much heat can make you tired, hurt your job performance, and increase your chance of injury. You can get skin rash. You can also get:

- Dehydration - When your body loses water, you can't cool off fast enough. You feel thirsty and weak.
- Cramps - You can get muscle cramps from the heat even after you leave work.
- Heat exhaustion - You feel tired, nauseous, headachy, and giddy (dizzy and silly). Your skin is damp and looks muddy or flushed. You may faint.
- Heat stroke - You may have hot dry skin and a high temperature, or you may feel confused. You may have convulsions or become unconscious. Heat stroke can kill you unless you get emergency medical help.



Protect Yourself



Try to do these things:

- Drink a lot of cool water all day. Every 15 minutes, you may need a cup of water (5 to 7 ounces). Don't wait until you are thirsty, by then, there's a good chance you're already on your way to being dehydrated. Electrolyte drinks are good for replacing both water and minerals lost through sweating. Never drink alcohol, and avoid caffeinated beverages like coffee and soda.

- Keep taking rest breaks. Rest in a cool, shady spot. Take advantage of fans and air-conditioners. For heavy work in hot areas, take turns with other workers, so some can rest. Get enough sleep at night.

- Wear light weight, light-colored clothing, made of cotton. If you work in protective clothing, you need more rest breaks. You may also need to check your temperature and heart rate.

- Do the heaviest work in the coolest time of the day. Work in the shade.

- If you travel to a warm area for a new job, you need time for your body to get used to the heat. Allow your body to adjust over a few days. Be extra careful the first 2 weeks on the job.

Heat Stroke

Heat stroke occurs when the body has depleted its supply of water and salt, and the victim's body temperature rises to deadly levels. Heat stroke is a medical emergency. It can cause permanent damage to the brain and vital organs or even death. Heat stroke can occur suddenly, with little warning.

Symptoms of heat stroke may include:

- No sweating (in cases victim may sweat profusely)
- High temperature (105° or more)
- Delirious behavior
- Loss of Consciousness
- Coma

If you think someone has heat stroke, CALL emergency services immediately!! (911) It is vital to lower the victim's body temperature right away. Seconds count. Move your co-worker to a cool place, wipe his/her skin with cool water, fan your co-worker and loosen his/her clothes.

For further information on heat stress a 15-page booklet, **Working in Hot Environments**, is available free from National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health Publications, 4676 Columbia Parkway, Cincinnati, Ohio 45226; telephone (513) 533-8287.