

Dealing with the Heat

You don't have to work in the desert to suffer from too much heat on the job. Even in a moderate climate, many sites are hot and uncomfortable, but discomfort isn't the only problem. If you don't take the proper precautions, heat can give you a rash, make you pass out, or even kill you.

What to look out for :

- Tiredness and lack of mental awareness which increase the chances of accidents.
- Excessive sweating. The body produces sweat so the evaporation will cool you off.
- Heat rash occurs when your sweat glands swell and get blocked.

Heat Stress Information



Symptoms:

Side Effects:

Treatment:

Heat cramps

Occurs from excessive sweating.

Muscle pain, muscle spasms usually in the arms, legs, back, and stomach.

Stop work, drink fluids, and rest in a cool area. Drinking electrolyte solutions may also help.

Heat exhaustion

Occurs when the whole body, especially the circulatory system, becomes extremely stressed.

Pale, flushed face and neck; clammy skin; heavy sweating; fatigue; shortness of breath; headache, dizziness, or fainting; nausea and vomiting; and rapid heartbeat and breathing.

Take a break in a cool, shaded area. Remove as much clothing as possible. Drink water or electrolyte solutions. Get medical help or treat for shock if necessary.

Heat stroke

Occurs when the body becomes unable to control its temperature.

Dizziness and confusion; red, hot, dry skin; nausea and vomiting; very little sweating; rapid pulse; high body temperature (around 105%); convulsions; and loss of consciousness.

Call 911 to get an ambulance immediately. Immerse the worker in cool water or ice.

Prevention:

Heatstroke is predictable and preventable. Take these steps to prevent heatstroke during hot weather:

- Wear loose-fitting, lightweight clothing. Wearing excess clothing or clothing that fits tightly won't allow your body to cool.
- Wear light-colored clothing. Dark clothing absorbs heat. Light-colored clothing can help keep you cool by reflecting the sun.
- Drink plenty of fluids. Staying hydrated will help your body sweat and maintain a normal body temperature.
- Take extra precautions with certain medications. Be on the lookout for heat-related problems if you take medications that can affect your body's ability to stay hydrated and dissipate heat.
- Take it easy during the hottest parts of the day. If you can't avoid strenuous activity in hot weather, follow the same precautions and rest frequently in a cool spot.