

HOW TO RECOGNIZE AND PREVENT HEAT STRESS



Recognizing and preventing heat stress is critical for ensuring the health and safety of you and your teammates. Review the information below to learn about heat-related health problems and illnesses. See the next page for important information about recommended work practice controls and PPE.



Average Annual Heat-Related Health Incidents

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, heat is the leading weather-related killer, ending more lives than hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, and lightning combined.

702

Heat-Related Deaths

67,512

Emergency Dept. Visits

9,235

People Hospitalized

Heat-Related Health Problems and Illnesses

Heat Rash

Heat rash often occurs in hot, humid environments where sweat does not easily evaporate from the skin. The sweat ducts become clogged, resulting in a rash. Heat rash can be very uncomfortable if the rash is extensive or complicated by infection.

Heat Cramps

Heat cramps may occur alone or simultaneously with other heat-related illnesses. Heat cramps are painful muscle spasms caused by sweating while performing hard physical labor in a hot environment. The cramps may be caused by either too much or too little salt.

Fainting

Fainting may occur when an employee who is not used to the heat stands in one position for an extended period of time. An employee who has fainted should recover after a brief period of sitting or lying down. Moving around, rather than standing still, will reduce the possibility of fainting.

Heat Exhaustion

Heat exhaustion is caused by the loss of large amounts of fluid by sweating, sometimes with excessive loss of salt. An employee suffering from heat exhaustion still sweats but may experience headaches, dizziness, weakness, and vomiting.

Heat Stroke

Heat stroke is caused when the body uses up all its water and salt, and sweating ceases. Temperature can rise quickly, and heat stroke occurs when the body temperature is over 104 degrees, and any of the following symptoms are present: weakness; confusion; distress; strange behavior; hot, dry red skin; rapid pulse; headache; or dizziness.

PremiStar Safety Advisory

Recommended Practices for Preventing Heat Stress

- Consume adequate fluids
- Perform work activities during cooler periods of the day
- Minimize activity in hot areas
- Coordinate project scheduling with clients
- Reduce the number and duration of exposures
- Wear proper clothing
- Provide recovery areas



Recommendations based on commonly accepted practices. Always understand the best safety practices in your situation.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Reflective clothing
- Auxiliary body cooling
- Ice vests
- Wetted clothing (low humidity)
- Water-cooled garments (hoods and vests)
- Circulating air (vortex tubes, compressed air)
- Cooling band: Evaporates and cools
- Cooling shirt: Wicks sweat and cools



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