

Heat Stress Prevention

1.0 Purpose

This Heat Stress Prevention Program has been developed to provide workers with the training and equipment necessary to protect them from heat related exposures and illnesses.

2.0 Training

All employees who are or may be exposed to potential heat related illnesses will receive training on the following:

- The environmental and personal risk factors that cause heat related illnesses;
- The employer's procedures for identifying, evaluating and controlling exposures to the environmental and personal risk factors for heat illness;
- The importance of frequent consumption of small quantities of water, up to 4 cups per hour under extreme conditions of work and heat;
- The importance of acclimatization;
- The different types of heat illness and the common signs and symptoms of heat illness;
- The importance of immediately reporting to the employer, directly or through the employee's supervisor, symptoms or signs of heat illness in themselves, or in co-workers.
- The employer's procedures for responding to symptoms of possible heat illness, including how emergency medical services will be provided should they become necessary;
- Procedures for contacting emergency medical services, and if necessary, for transporting employees to a point where they can be reached by an emergency medical service provider;
- How to provide clear and precise directions to the work site.

3.0 Supervisor Responsibilities

- All supervisors will be provided a copy of this program and training documents prior to assignment of employees working in environments where heat exposures may occur.
- Supervisors will be provided the procedures to follow to implement the applicable provisions of this program.
- Supervisors will be provided the procedures to follow when an employee exhibits symptoms consistent with possible heat illness, including emergency response procedures.

4.0 Provision of Water

Employees shall have access to potable water. Water shall be provided in sufficient quantity at the beginning of the work shift to provide one quart per employee per hour for drinking the entire shift for a total of 2 gallons per employee per 8-hour shift. Employees may begin the shift with smaller quantities of water if effective procedures for replenishment of water during the shift have been implemented to provide employees one quart or more per hour.

5.0 Access to Shade

Employees suffering from heat illness or believing a preventative recovery period is needed shall be provided access to an area with shade that is either open to the air or provided with ventilation or cooling for a period of no less than five minutes. Such access to shade shall be permitted at all times. Shade areas can include trees, buildings, canopies, lean-tos, or other partial and/or temporary structures that are either ventilated or open to air movement. The interior of cars or trucks are not considered shade unless the vehicles are air conditioned or kept from heating up in the sun in some other way.

6.0 Heat Stress Disorders

6.1 Heat Rash (Prickly Heat)

Symptoms:

- Red blotches and extreme itchiness in areas persistently damp with sweat.
- Prickling sensation on the skin when sweating occurs.

Treatment:

- Cool environment.
- Cool shower.
- Thorough drying.

Heat rashes typically disappear in a few days after exposure. If the skin is not cleaned frequently enough the rash may become infected.

6.2 Heat Cramps

Symptoms:

- Loss of salt through excessive sweating.
- Cramping in back, legs and arms.

Treatment:

- Stretch and massage muscles.
- Replace salt by drinking commercially available carbohydrate/electrolyte replacement fluids.

6.3 Heat Exhaustion

Heat exhaustion occurs when the body can no longer keep blood flowing to supply vital organs and at the same time send blood to the skin to reduce body temperature.

Symptoms:

- Weakness.
- Difficulty continuing work.
- Headache.
- Breathlessness.
- Nausea or vomiting.
- Feeling faint or actually fainting.

Treatment:

- Call 911.

Help the victim to cool off by:

- Resting in a cool place.
- Drinking cool water.
- Removing unnecessary clothing.
- Loosening clothing.
- Showering or sponging with cool water.

It takes 30 minutes to cool the body down once a worker becomes overheated and suffers heat exhaustion.

6.4 Heat Stroke

Heat stroke occurs when the body can no longer cool itself and body temperature rises to critical levels.

Symptoms:

- Confusion.
- Irrational behavior.
- Loss of consciousness.
- Convulsions.
- Lack of sweating.
- Hot, dry skin.
- Abnormally high body temperature.

Treatment:

- Call 911.

Provide immediate, aggressive, general cooling.

- Immerse victim in tub of cool water or;
- Place in cool shower; or
- Spray with cool water from a hose; or
- Wrap victim in cool, wet sheets and fan rapidly.
- Transport victim to hospital.

Do not give anything by mouth to an unconscious victim.

7.0 Safe Work Procedures

7.1 Supervisors Responsibilities

Supervisors are responsible for performing the following:

- Give workers frequent breaks in a cool area away from heat.
- Adjust work practices as necessary when workers complain of heat stress.
- Oversee heat stress training and acclimatization for new workers and for workers who have been off the job for a period of time.
- Monitor the workplace to determine when hot conditions arise.
- Increase air movement by using fans where possible.
- Provide potable water in required quantities.
- Determine whether workers are drinking enough water.
- Make allowances for workers who must wear personal protective clothing (welders, etc.) and equipment that retains heat and restricts the evaporation of sweat.
- Schedule hot jobs for the cooler part of the day; schedule routine maintenance and repair work in hot areas for the cooler times of the day.
- Make available to all workers, cooling devices (hard hat liners/bibs/neck bands) to help rid bodies of excessive heat.

7.2 Workers

Workers are responsible for performing the following:

- Follow instructions and training for controlling heat stress.
- Be alert to symptoms in yourself and others.
- Determine if any prescription medications you're required to take can increase heat stress.
- Wear light, loose-fitting clothing that permits the evaporation of sweat.
- Wear light colored garments that absorb less heat from the sun.
- Drink small amounts of water – approximately 1 cup every 15 minutes.
- Avoid beverages such as tea or coffee.
- Avoid eating hot, heavy meals.
- Do not take salt tablets unless prescribed by a physician.
- Review Attachment 1 for additional information.

8.0 Program Review

The Safety Director will periodically review this program for compliance with all applicable regulatory standards. Updates will be provided to all employees.

9.0 Emergency Action

If an Emergency Situation arises. Supervisors are advised to call 911.

Attachment 1

Heat Illness Prevention Guidance for Workers

Awareness of heat illness symptoms can save your life or the life of a co-worker. The following provides valuable information concerning heat-related illnesses and preventative measures.

- If you are coming back to work from an illness or an extended break or you are just starting a job working in the heat, it is important to be aware that you are more vulnerable to heat stress until your body has time to adjust. Let your employer know you are not used to the heat. It takes about 5-7 days for your body to adjust.

- Drinking plenty of water frequently is vital for workers exposed to the heat. An individual may produce as much as 2 to 3 gallons of sweat per day. In order to replenish that fluid, you should drink 3 to 4 cups of water every hour starting at the beginning of your shift.
- Taking your breaks in a cool shaded area and allowing time for recovery from the heat during the day are effective ways to avoid a heat-related illness.
- Avoid or limit the use of alcohol and caffeine during periods of extreme heat. Both dehydrate the body.
- If you or a co-worker start to feel symptoms such as nausea, dizziness, weakness or unusual fatigue, let your supervisor know and rest in a cool shaded area. If symptoms persist or worsen seek immediate medical attention.
- Whenever possible, wear clothing that provides protection from the sun but allows airflow to the body. Protect your head and shade your eyes if working outdoors.
- When working in the heat pay extra attention to your co-workers and be sure you know how to call for medical attention.