



WORKING IN HEAT

This quick reference guide is designed to raise awareness around working in heat.
It is a summary document only.

Whether you operate a business under OSH or WHS regulations everyone has a duty when it comes to working in heat. These duties are to manage the risks associated with working in heat to prevent injury or illness to workers. There are **3 primary contributing factors** associated with heat related illness.



Environment



Employer



Worker

It's important to remember that although companies can provide controls, the importance of educating and empowering workers to manage their health to prevent heat illness is key.

DIRECT ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

- Air Temperature
- Humidity
- Air Flow
- UV and Sun Exposure

EMPLOYER (DUTY OF CARE)

- Undertake risk assessments to determine suitable controls
- Scheduling work for cooler times
- Provision of uniforms & PPE that are light weight and suitable for the environment
- Provision of items such as water, electrolyte solutions, cooling neck wraps etc.
- Modification of work to either automate or reduce physical exertion
- Introduce ways to cool the workplace where possible
- Limit lone work or provide lone worker monitoring
- Undertake regular auditing to provide assurance that controls are in place
- Train workers to understand the risks and controls associated with working in heat

WORKER

- Maximise use of controls provided by the business (i.e. regular hydration)
- Manage own health/capacity of working in heat (i.e. report any episodes of feeling unwell, take regular breaks as required)
- Wear the required PPE provided by the company and suggest alternatives if not suitable
- Look out for your workmates by identifying the warning signs of heat related illness
- Actively participate in training courses provided by your employer



SPOT THE SIGNS OF HEAT ILLNESS

Dehydration

Seek medical advice

- Mild to severe thirst
- Lowered performance, physical and mental
- Dry Lips and Tongue
- Reduced or dark urine

Heat Exhaustion

Call an ambulance immediately

- Dehydration, thirst, and
- Elevated body temperature
- Headaches and dizziness
- Muscle cramps.
- Sweating
- Weakness or fatigue
- Nausea
- reduced or dark urine output

Heat Stroke

Call an ambulance immediately

- High body temperature above 39 degrees Celsius
- Skin can be pink, warm and dry, or cool and blue
- Pounding, rapid pulse
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Disorientation or impaired judgement
- Collapse, seizures and unconsciousness
- Sweating stops
- Cramps
- Headache, dizziness and visual disturbances
- Clumsiness or slower reaction times
- Irritability and mental confusion
- Cardiac arrest

Other symptoms where medical advice is advisable

- **Heat Rash**
 - Itchy Rash with raised red spots on the face, neck back, chest or thighs
- **Heat Cramps**
 - Painful cramps in muscles which can be worse when undertaking physical work
- **Fainting**
 - Self-explanatory, can occur while standing or rising from a sitting position

If you require more information on this topic or other aspects of managing safety, then please contact the S3 Safety Group.

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