



During the summer, workers may perform more job tasks outdoors. This exposure to high temperatures and humidity can lead to life-threatening heat related illnesses. Heat-related illnesses are preventable. Protect your employees by following these suggestions.

## Before Excessive Heat Situations

- **Stay informed.**
  - Monitor for heat advisories in your area at the NOAA National Weather Service. <http://www.weather.gov/>
  - Listen to local news and weather channels during extreme heat conditions for health and safety updates.
- **Know the terminology.**
  - **Excessive Heat Advisory:** An excessive heat event is occurring; prolonged exposure or strenuous activity might result in a heat-related illness.
  - **Excessive Heat Warning:** Life-threatening heat is occurring. Take precautions immediately!
- **Discuss heat precautions with your employees.**
  - Limit or avoid activity during the day.
  - Keep hydrated; drinking at least every 15 minutes.
  - Wear wide-brimmed hats for protection from the sun.
  - Wear sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher.
  - Dress in lightweight, loose-fitting, light-colored clothing.
  - Train employees to recognize the signs of heat illness.
- **Establish shade or cooling areas for your employees.**
  - Set up awnings or canopies, if natural shade is not available.
- **Prepare for power outages.**
  - High summertime temperatures increase energy demand for cooling; overloaded energy systems can result in power outages.
  - For more information see the Power Outage handouts in this manual.
- **Prepare your facilities.**
  - Maintain your air conditioning system to ensure it is able to work when you need it most.
  - Check air-conditioning ducts for proper insulation.
  - Window air conditioners should be installed snugly and insulated, if necessary.
  - Weather-strip doors and windows to keep cool air in.
  - Cover windows that receive morning or afternoon sun with drapes, shades, awnings, or louvers.
  - Use electric or ceiling fans to improve ventilation and comfort.

## During Excessive Heat

- **If employees work outdoors,**
  - Schedule work during the morning and late-afternoon hours.
  - Avoid strenuous activities outdoors, especially mid-day.
  - Adjust work schedules to provide workers with breaks in the shade or an air-conditioned area.
  - Postpone nonessential tasks.
  - Make sure employees drink plenty of water, frequently.

## Heat-Related Illnesses

- **Heat stroke is a life-threatening situation!**
  - Occurs when the body is unable to regulate its temperature and the body is unable to cool itself.
  - **Signs:** extremely high body temperature (above 103°F)
    - red, hot, and dry skin (no sweating)
    - rapid, strong pulse
    - throbbing headache
    - dizziness
    - nausea
    - confusion
    - unconsciousness
  - **If you see any of these signs, get medical assistance immediately!**
- **Heat exhaustion.**
  - A milder form of heat-related illness that can develop after several days of exposure to high temperatures and inadequate or unbalanced replacement of fluids.
  - **Signs:** cool, moist, pale or flushed skin
    - heavy sweating
    - headache
    - nausea
    - dizziness
    - weakness
  - Cool the victim by: providing cool, nonalcoholic beverages
    - rest in a cool or air-conditioned environment
    - cool shower, bath, or sponge bath
  - If the person vomits or begins to lose consciousness, **get medical assistance immediately!**
- **Heat cramps.**
  - Muscle pains or spasms (usually in the legs or abdomen) that occur in association with loss of fluids and electrolytes following strenuous activity.
  - Often an early sign the body is having trouble with heat.
- **Sunburn.**
  - Damage to the skin that significantly slows the skin's ability to release heat.
  - Usually minor discomfort that heals in a week.
  - Severe sunburn may require medical attention.
- **Heat rash.**
  - Skin irritation caused by excessive sweating during hot, humid weather.

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