



Toolbox Talk: Working in Elevated Heat

What is Heat Stress?

Heat stress occurs when the body can't cool itself by sweating and can lead to heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

Managers and supervisors whose employees work in areas of concern should:

- Help prevent heat-related illnesses by taking steps to keep employees' core temperatures from rising.
- Work with EHS to create a Heat Injury and Illness Prevention Plan to identify and outline potential mitigation strategies for working in elevated heat.

Increased Risk Factors

Additional factors that can increase the risk when working in heat include:

- The strenuousness of the task.
- Inadequate hydration.
- Humidity level.
- Personal risk factors, including physical fitness, diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, certain medications, substance use, or pregnancy. Contact your doctor about specific questions.

Preventing Heat Stress

- Know the signs and symptoms of heat-related illnesses.
- Block out the sun or other heat sources.
- Use fans or air conditioning units.
- Increase water consumption.
- Wear lightweight, light-colored, and loose-fitting clothes.
- Avoid alcohol, caffeinated drinks, and heavy meals.
- Wear sunscreen of SPF 30 or greater and reapply it every two hours.
- Take breaks in shaded or cool areas.



- Schedule certain strenuous tasks early in the morning or later in the afternoon to avoid peak heat times.

Signs and Symptoms of Heat-Related Illnesses

Heat exhaustion:

- Headache, dizziness, lightheadedness, or fainting.
- Weakness and moist skin.
- Mood changes, irritability, or confusion.
- Nausea or vomiting.

Heat stroke:

- Dry, hot skin with no sweating.
- Mental confusion, abnormal thinking or behavior, slurred speech, or loss of consciousness.
- Seizures or convulsions.
- May be fatal.

Treating Heat-Related Illnesses

If you or someone you observe is experiencing signs of a heat illness:

1. Notify a supervisor or manager.
2. Ensure they have water.
3. Move them to a cooler area.
4. Cool them using water, ice, or a fan, have them remove unnecessary clothing, and don't leave them alone.

If you have any doubts about their condition, call 911.

If they show any signs of heat stroke, this is a serious condition and a medical emergency:

1. Call 911 immediately.
2. Cool them with water or ice.
3. Stay with them until help arrives.