



HEAT ILLNESS PREVENTION

TOOLBOX TALK SERIES – HEAT EMERGENCIES

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Eight Ways to Prevent Heat Illnesses This Summer by Ally Safety

<https://youtu.be/vC1qGkxb8e4?si=hsY2Cj6SPTzdg0ZT>

1. Understanding Heat Stress

Heat stress occurs when the body's ability to cool itself through sweating and blood flow is overwhelmed by external heat or strenuous activity. This can lead to a buildup of internal heat, which in turn causes a range of health issues. Outdoor workers, especially in construction, landscaping, and roadwork, are at increased risk during late spring and summer.

Key Causes:

- High air temperatures and humidity
 - Direct sun exposure
 - Strenuous physical activity
 - Dehydration
 - Lack of acclimatization
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2. Types of Heat-Related Illnesses

a. Heat Rash

- *Description:* Small red bumps or blisters on the skin.
- *Cause:* Blocked sweat ducts during prolonged sweating.
- *Prevention:* Keep skin dry, wear breathable clothing, and avoid tight clothing.

b. Heat Cramps

- *Description:* Sudden muscle spasms, often in the legs or abdomen.
- *Cause:* Loss of electrolytes through sweating.
- *Prevention:* Replenish salts and electrolytes via electrolyte drinks or salty snacks.



c. Heat Exhaustion

- *Symptoms:* Heavy sweating, weakness, dizziness, nausea, headache, fast pulse.
- *Action:* Move the person to shade, provide cool fluids, loosen clothing, apply cold compresses.

d. Heat Stroke (Medical Emergency)

- *Symptoms:* Confusion, hot dry skin or profuse sweating, high body temp, unconsciousness.
 - *Action:* Call 911. Begin cooling with cold water, ice packs, and fans immediately.
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3. Prevention Strategies

Hydration:

- Drink water every 15–20 minutes.
- Avoid sugary, caffeinated, or alcoholic drinks which can dehydrate you.

Breaks and Shade:

- Take rest breaks in shaded or air-conditioned areas.
- Schedule strenuous tasks for cooler times (early morning or late afternoon).

Clothing:

- Wear loose, lightweight, and light-colored clothing.
- Use hats with brims and sunglasses to reduce heat exposure.

Acclimatization:

- New workers should gradually increase workload over 1–2 weeks.
- Returning workers should follow similar schedules to re-acclimate.

Buddy System:

- Always work in pairs or groups during high heat to monitor each other for symptoms.
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4. Emergency Response

If a worker shows signs of heat stress:

1. **Stop Work Immediately**
2. **Relocate** to a shaded or cool place.
3. **Hydrate** with cool (not ice-cold) water.
4. **Cool the Body** with wet towels, fans, or misting.
5. **Call Emergency Services** if symptoms suggest heat stroke.
6. **Do Not Leave the Worker Alone** — stay with them and monitor symptoms.

Conclusion

Heat stress isn't just uncomfortable — it can quickly become life-threatening if ignored. But with the right habits, awareness, and teamwork, it's 100% preventable. Remember, your health and safety come first. Start every shift with hydration, pace yourself throughout the day, and speak up if you or a coworker starts showing symptoms.

Safety isn't just policy — it's personal. Let's commit to watching out for each other and making sure everyone goes home healthy at the end of the day.

