



Outdoor Heat Illness Prevention

When outdoor temperatures exceed 80° Cal/OSHA requires employers to have additional prevention measures in place to protect employees from heat illnesses. Everyone can be susceptible to heat illness because it is about temperature, acclimatization, exertion, and hydration. This Safety Talk will help you understand the four types of heat illness and proactive measures you can take to prevent heat illness.

HEAT RASH

Heat rash is typically red clusters of small blisters/pimples on the skin. Usually on the neck, chest, groin, or in elbow creases.

What to do – Take a recovery break in a shady, cool area. Drink slightly cool water and keep rash dry.

HEAT CRAMPS

Cramps, muscle pain, or spasms are felt most in the arms and legs and can even occur after the work has stopped.

What to do – Take a recovery break in a shady, cool area. Drink slightly cool water. Wait for cramps to stop before doing any physical activity. Seek medical help if cramps last more than (1) hour or if you're on a low sodium diet or have heart problems.



HEAT EXHAUSTION

The body becomes overly stressed with symptoms such as:

- Cool, pale, clammy skin
- Heavy sweating
- Fatigue or weakness
- Shortness of breath
- Headache, dizziness, or fainting
- Nausea or vomiting
- Rapid heartbeat and breathing
- Thirst

What to do - Get out of the heat immediately. Loosen/remove clothing. Apply cool water/ice packs to the body. Drink slightly cool water and electrolytes. *Seek medical help.*

HEAT STROKE

This is the most serious stage of heat illness. Symptoms may include:

- Red, hot, dry skin with very little sweating
- High body temperature, 105° F or higher
- Headache, dizziness, confusion
- Nausea or vomiting
- Rapid pulse

What to do

CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY

- ✓ Get to a shady cool area and remove unnecessary clothing
- ✓ Drink slightly cool water if possible
- ✓ Fan vigorously
- ✓ Apply cool water to clothing or skin
- ✓ Apply ice packs under arms, to the neck, back, and groin area

How can you prevent heat illness?

DRINK WATER

The most important thing you can do to prevent heat illness is drink plenty of water!!! The key is to drink water throughout your shift, even when you don't feel thirsty. When working in temperatures of 80° or more, Cal/OSHA requires employers to have one quart of water (4 cups) per hour available for each employee during their shift. Employees should encourage each other to drink water every hour.

ACCLIMATE

Acclimatization is a process where the body needs time to adjust to increased heat exposure. Cal/OSHA requires employers to observe and check in with employees during the acclimatization timeframe (4-14 days).

TAKE RECOVERY BREAKS IN THE SHADE

When working in temperatures of 80° or more, take regular breaks in the shade and drink water. Employees who wait until symptoms appear before seeking shade and recovery are at a higher risk of developing heat illness.



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ADDITIONAL PREVENTION CONSIDERATIONS

- If possible, wear long sleeves and pants to keep the radiant heat of the sun away from your skin.
- When wearing heavy personal protective equipment, respirators, or when conducting significant exertion pay extra attention to symptoms of heat illness you may be experiencing.
- Check the effects of your medications
- Avoid heavy meals, your body generates heat through digestion
- If you have a chronic disease, such as heart disease or diabetes, check with your doctor for heat illness prevention guidance.

Additional Resources:

- SDRMA Model Heat Illness Prevention Program Template
- Cal/OSHA [§3395](#), Heat Illness Prevention Regulation
- Cal/OSHA [Heat Illness Prevention Resources](#)

This *Safety Talk* provides awareness level training on heat illness prevention. If this information is unclear or if you have any additional questions, please talk to your supervisor.