



Heat Stress Awareness

Staying Safe While Working in the Texas Heat

Working in the Texas summer heat places extra stress on your body. Whether you work indoors in an open manufacturing facility or outdoors on a construction project, high temperatures and humidity can quickly lead to heat-related illness. Even healthy, experienced workers can become sick if they do not stay hydrated or recognize the warning signs early.

Your body naturally cools itself by sweating. When temperatures are high or you are working hard, your body may not be able to cool itself fast enough. As your body temperature rises, heat illness can develop rapidly.

Types of Heat Illness

Heat Cramps

Heat cramps are often the first sign that your body is struggling with the heat.

Symptoms may include:

- Painful muscle cramps or spasms
- Heavy sweating
- Fatigue

If heat cramps occur, stop work, move to a cooler area, drink water, and allow your body to recover before returning to work.

Heat Exhaustion

Heat exhaustion develops when your body loses too much water and salt through sweating.

Common symptoms include:

- Heavy sweating
- Weakness or fatigue
- Headache
- Dizziness
- Nausea or vomiting
- Cool, pale, or clammy skin
- Fast heartbeat

Without treatment, heat exhaustion can quickly progress to heat stroke.



Heat Stroke

Heat stroke is a life-threatening emergency requiring immediate medical attention.

Symptoms include:

- Confusion
- Slurred speech
- Loss of consciousness
- Seizures
- Hot skin (with or without sweating)
- Body temperature above 103°F

If heat stroke is suspected, call 911 immediately while moving the person to a cool area and beginning cooling measures.

Preventing Heat Illness

The best way to prevent heat illness is to stay ahead of dehydration and allow your body time to cool.

Good work practices include:

- Drink water frequently throughout the day, even if you are not thirsty.
- Take breaks in shaded or air-conditioned areas whenever possible.
- Wear lightweight, breathable clothing appropriate for the job.
- Pace yourself during physically demanding work.
- Eat regular meals to replace electrolytes lost through sweating.
- Avoid excessive caffeine or alcohol before work, as both can contribute to dehydration.
- Allow your body time to adjust when temperatures increase or when returning to work after several days away.

Look Out for One Another

Heat illness can affect a person's judgment before they realize something is wrong.

If you notice a coworker who appears confused, unusually tired, dizzy, unsteady, or is acting differently than normal, check on them immediately. Encourage them to stop work, move to a cooler location, drink water if appropriate, and notify a supervisor if symptoms continue or worsen.

Recognizing the signs early can prevent a serious medical emergency.

Key Takeaways

Heat illness is preventable.

Remember these three simple steps:

- **Drink Water Frequently**



- Take Time to Cool Down
- Recognize the Warning Signs Early

Taking care of yourself and watching out for your coworkers helps ensure everyone goes home safely at the end of the day.

HEAT-RELATED ILLNESSES

WHAT TO LOOK FOR	WHAT TO DO
HEAT STROKE • High body temperature (103°F or higher) • Hot, red, dry, or damp skin • Fast, strong pulse • Headache • Dizziness • Nausea • Confusion • Losing consciousness (passing out)	
HEAT EXHAUSTION • Heavy sweating • Cold, pale, and clammy skin • Fast, weak pulse • Nausea or vomiting • Muscle cramps • Tiredness or weakness • Dizziness • Headache • Fainting (passing out)	
HEAT CRAMPS • Heavy sweating during intense exercise • Muscle pain or spasms	
SUNBURN • Painful, red, and warm skin • Blisters on the skin	
HEAT RASH • Red clusters of small blisters that look like pimples on the skin (usually on the neck, chest, groin, or in elbow creases)	

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