

# PROTECTING YOUR WORKERS FROM EXTREME HEAT

Every year, thousands of workers become sick from exposure to heat and some even die. Supervisors are in a unique position to prevent heat illness by providing workers with *water*, opportunity to *rest* and *shade*.

## HEAT ILLNESS CAN BE DEADLY

When an employee works in a hot environment, the body must get rid of excess heat to maintain a stable internal temperature. If the body cannot get rid of excess heat, the body's core temperature rises and the heart rate increases. As the body continues to store heat, the worker begins to lose concentration, has difficulty focusing on a task, may become irritable or sick and often loses the desire to drink.

## Who is at Risk?

- Employees exposed to hot and humid environments are at risk of heat-related illness.
- Workers exposed to direct sunlight may experience up to 15-degrees more heat exposure than the heat index indicates.
- Some workers might be at greater risk if they have not acclimatized or if they have certain health conditions. This includes new workers, temporary workers or those returning to work after a week or more off.

## HEAT ACCLIMATIZATION IS KEY!

**Know the Signs.** Excessive exposure to heat can cause a range of heat-related illnesses. If you or a coworker has symptoms of a heat-related illness, tell your supervisor right away.

<b>Heat Rash</b>	Skin irritation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep the affected area dry</li> <li>• Have the employee work in a cooler, less humid environment</li> </ul>
<b>Heat Cramps</b>	Muscle cramps, pain or spasms in the abdomen, arms or legs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drink water, clear juice or a sports beverage and rest in a shady, cool area</li> <li>• Wait a few hours before returning to work and seek medical attention if the cramps do not go away</li> </ul>
<b>Heat Exhaustion</b>	Rapid heartbeat, headache, heavy sweating, nausea, dizziness, weakness, irritability, thirst and a slightly elevated body temperature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rest in a cool area, drink plenty of water/cool nonalcoholic beverages and cool the employee with cold compresses/ice packs</li> <li>• Seek medical attention if symptoms worsen or do not improve within 60 minutes</li> </ul>
<b>Heat Stroke</b>	Confusion, fainting, seizures, high body temperature and excessive sweating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heat stroke is a medical emergency that may result in death! <b>Call 911 immediately!</b></li> </ul>



# WATER. REST. SHADE.

*The work can't get done without them.*



# Stay safe and healthy!

**WATER. REST. SHADE.** The work can't get done without them.

## HEAT KILLS - GET HELP RIGHT AWAY!

### Did You Know?

- In 2014 alone, 2,630 workers suffered from heat illness and 18 died from heat stroke and related causes on the job.
- Of the 84 heat-related deaths investigated by OSHA in 2013-2014, 17 of 23 died within the first three days on the job, an indication that employers may not be providing workers with enough time to acclimate to hotter weather.

### HEAT-RELATED ILLNESS CAN BE PREVENTED

**What can you do?** With summer temperatures rising, now is the best time to prepare for working outdoors in excessive heat by following a few simple steps:

#### Employers

- Schedule heavy work during the coolest parts of the day
- Acclimatize workers to hot environments
- Create an Emergency Plan
- Train employees about heat illness recognition and prevention

#### Employees

- Wear a hat and light-colored, loose-fitting, breathable clothing
- Drink water frequently!
- Rest in the shade to cool down
- Learn the signs of heat illness and know what to do in an emergency

### RESOURCES



- OSHA's **Heat Campaign** website available at [www.osha.gov/heat](http://www.osha.gov/heat)
- Free downloadable Smartphone App called the **Heat Safety Tool**
- Free **safety and health advice** provided by the Illinois On-Site Safety and Health Consultation Program. Program information can be obtained by calling (800) 972-4216.

Pertinent worker safety information is also included on the:

- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) **Heat Watch** website;
- National Institutes of Health (NIH) **Heat Illness** page; and the
- National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) **Heat Stress** page.