

Working in the heat and humidity is unavoidable in the long summer days for many businesses. While some employees may be acclimated to hot and humid conditions, each day offers different conditions that may trigger an unexpected reaction.

Follow these key steps in making sure employees stay comfortable.

- Provide plenty of water – about 2 gallons per employee per 8-hour shift
- Minimize exposure – work when shaded or early in the day or late in the evening.
- Acclimate – build up a tolerance to working in the heat (usually takes about 2 weeks)
- Allow rest breaks – as often as needed depending on the conditions.
- Monitor worker conditions – use buddy system and have everyone stay alert to symptoms
- Monitor environmental conditions – know the temperature and humidity.

Consider these steps in reducing exposure:

- Ventilation and fans
 - Shield from heat sources
 - Minimize need for PPE
 - Use machinery when possible
 - Provide cooling apparel
 - Rotate workers or schedules
 - Do heavy work during the coolest part of the day.
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- Use the buddy system
 - Wear light colored, loose fitting cotton clothing
 - Avoid eating large meals
 - Avoid alcohol
 - Avoid caffeine

Conditions that can increase risk:

- Some medications (check with your doctor)
- Wearing PPE such as a respirator
- A prior heat-related illness

High Temperature + High Humidity + Physical Work = Heat Illness

Heat Rash

Symptoms: tiny, blister-like red spots on the skin, commonly on clothed areas of the body; prickling sensation.

What to do: clean skin, apply mild drying lotion or cornstarch; wear loose clothing; see a physician if rash persists.

Heat Cramps

Symptoms: painful spasms of leg, arm or abdominal muscles, heavy sweating, thirst, occurs during or after hard work.

What to do: loosen clothing; drink lightly salted beverages or sports drinks, massage, rest.

Heat Exhaustion

Symptoms: fatigue, dizzy, lightheaded, headache, weak, irritable, confused, nauseous, vomiting, fainting, passing out and pale, clammy skin; excessive thirst, dry mouth, may also have heat cramps, rapid breathing, chills, tingling of hands or feet.

What to do: **act quickly**, move person to cool or shaded area, if dizzy have person lay down with feet elevated; if nauseous have person lay on their side, loosen or remove heavy clothing, give cool water to drink (a cup every 15 minutes), fan, spray a cool mist of water or a wet cloth to skin, call 911 if person doesn't feel better within a few minutes.

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Heat Stroke

Symptoms: usually occurs suddenly; dry pale skin, with no sweat; hot red skin that looks sunburned, rapid breathing, irritable ; confused, headache, dizziness, seizures, loss of consciousness.

What to do: Call 911 or transfer to nearest medical treatment facility, move person to cool or shaded area, lay person on their back and elevate legs, if having seizures move objects away, if nauseous have person lay on their side, loosen or remove heavy clothing, give cool water to drink (a cup every 15 minutes), fan, spray a cool mist of water or place a wet cloth on skin or cover with a wet sheet, put ice packs under arm pits and groin area, don't give salt.