



Operating Experience Alert

Heat Related Stress

What You Should Know:

What is heat stress? Simply put, it's the body's inability to rid itself of excess heat. Working (or playing) when it is hot, and not regularly employing cooling techniques, taxes our body's ability to regulate temperature, which places workers at risk for heat cramps, heat exhaustion, or heat stroke. The degree of stress is influenced by environmental conditions (air temperature, humidity, lack of wind, and sun intensity), age, activity level, pre-existing medical conditions, and clothing or protective gear.

There are many personal risk factors that may limit your ability to manage heat stress, such as:

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| High blood pressure | Obesity | Heart disease |
| Diabetes | Low fitness level | Medications (hypertension, diuretics) |
| Certain diets | Rapid weight loss | Alcohol or caffeinated drinks |



What You Can Do:

- **Heat Stress Screening Tool** – OSHA and NIOSH have partnered to provide a [Heat Safety Tool app](#) that can be loaded on your phone. The app calculates the heat index for the worksite and displays the current risk level to outdoor workers. It provides reminders at each risk level to protect workers from heat-related illness by offering protective measures, like drinking enough fluids, scheduling rest breaks, planning for and knowing what to do in an emergency, adjusting work operations, and monitoring each other for signs of heat-related illness.
- **Your Brother's Keeper** – Be aware of coworker's actions and appearance in hot working conditions.
 - **Heat Exhaustion** occurs when the body loses excessive amounts of water and electrolytes (salt) usually through prolonged heavy sweating. Warning signs include slurred speech, weakness, fatigue, nausea, dizziness, fast or shallow breathing.
 - **Heat Stroke** occurs when a person loses the ability to regulate their body temperature causing them to become critically overheated. *Symptoms of heat stroke include hot dry skin, chills, high body temperature, slurred speech, racing pulse, and headaches.*

For each of these conditions, get them to a cool location out of the sun, give them cool water and apply cool (not cold) cloths to their skin and place cold compresses under the arms and in the groin area. Immediately call 911 for assistance.

Contact your local safety representative for additional information about managing heat stress.