

WORKING IN THE HEAT

Safety Topic V6-0954

Health, Outdoors, Weather

Working in high temperatures can be dangerous if you aren't prepared. Heat-related illnesses can develop quickly and may become life-threatening without early action.



STAY SAFE IN HOT WEATHER

Plan Ahead. Before work starts, check the temperature, humidity, and sun exposure risk. Use heat index tools or apps to assess the day's conditions.

Hydrate Often. Drink water often throughout the day. Don't wait until you're thirsty.

Dress for the Heat. Wear lightweight, light-colored, and breathable clothing that covers the skin to protect against sun exposure. A wide-brimmed hat can provide additional shade.

Avoid Heavy or Non-Breathable Gear. Skip waterproof or non-ventilated clothing unless it's required for the task. These materials trap heat and can increase the risk of heat illness.

Use Sunscreen. Apply sunscreen to exposed skin before starting work. Reapply throughout the day, especially if sweating heavily.

Take Breaks in Cool Areas. Schedule rest periods in shaded or air-conditioned spaces.

Start Slow, Build Up. New or returning workers should gradually increase their workload over a period of time to allow their bodies to adjust to the heat.

Know the Warning Signs. Early symptoms of heat illness include headache, dizziness, thirst, and nausea. More serious signs include confusion, fainting, or dry, hot skin. Use the buddy system to watch for signs of heat illness.

Act Fast if Someone is in Trouble. Move the person to a cooler area, remove excess clothing, and apply cold compresses. Give water if they're alert. Call 911 for signs of heatstroke.

Discussion

What are the early warning signs of heat illness you should watch for?

How do you make sure you stay hydrated during a hot workday?