



BEAT THE HEAT: PREVENTION FACT SHEET

Heat related illnesses cover a range of medical conditions that can occur when the body is unable to properly cope with the heat.

These conditions include Heat Rash, Heat Cramps, Heat Exhaustion and Heat Stroke. While heat related illnesses can be serious and even life threatening, they are also completely preventable. Heat related illnesses occur when the body cannot sufficiently cool itself. Factors that contribute to this include:



ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

Weather conditions such as temperature and humidity.



OPERATIONAL FACTORS

E.g. Working in confined spaces or in close proximity to hot objects, and wearing heavy PPE.



PERSONAL FACTORS

Pre-existing physical and medical conditions as well as some medications.



ACCLIMATISATION

Personnel who have been away from the work environment for more than a week will need time to re-acclimatise.

Your daily checklist

Water

- Is there plenty of fresh, cool drinking water located as close as possible to workers?
- Are water coolers refilled throughout the day?

Shade

- Is there shade available for breaks and situations where workers need to recover?

Training

Do workers know the:

- Signs and symptoms of heat illness?
- Precautions to prevent heat illness?
- Importance of acclimatisation?
- Importance of drinking water frequently (even if they are not thirsty)?
- Steps to take if someone is experiencing symptoms?

Emergencies

- Does everyone know who to notify if there is an emergency?
- Can workers explain their location if they need to call an ambulance?
- Does everyone know how to provide heat related illness first aid?

Worker Reminders

- Drink water often
- Rest in the shade
- Report heat symptoms early
- Know what to do in an emergency

Ensure you know your site medical response protocols



HEAT STRESS AWARENESS - INTEGRATED GAS

If a risk of heat illness is identified, control measures need to be put in place. Some example controls are as follows:

Acclimatisation

- Acclimatise personnel before heavy work in the heat and assign lighter tasks if possible
- Ensure sufficient number of acclimatised individuals are available for heavy work
- Consider personnel coming directly from overseas or cooler climates

Air Conditioned Refuge

- Provide on-site air conditioned refuge and use fridges in refuge area to store cool drinks

Induction / Awareness Sessions

- Include heat stress and working in hot environments as topics in inductions, toolboxes and prestart meetings
- Ensure the effects of alcohol and other diuretics (e.g. coffee, energy drinks) on dehydration are understood
- Discuss medical conditions and medications that may increase susceptibility to a heat stress condition

PPE

- Use chilled water to cool neck and head
- Distribute wide brims and 'legionnaire' flaps for hardhats
- Use wide brimmed hats when hardhats are not worn
- Ensure sunscreen is made available and is regularly applied

Elimination of Heat Source

- Install shaded work areas/rest areas
- Ensure radiant heat sources are insulated
- Increase air movement by fans or evaporative systems
- Install heat shields

Supply of Cool Drinking Water

- Provide personal water containers
- Use ice and/or insulators to keep water cool in containers
- Consider 'Camel Back' water containers

Water Intake

- Drink at least 250mls of cool water per 15-20 minutes when working in heat, with regular small drinks instead of one large one
- Encourage pre-work and post-work hydration
- Drink fluid to a schedule, not just when thirsty
- Use electrolyte replacements when needed
- Monitor urine for colour changes throughout the day

Administrative Controls

- Consider changing work hours to minimise peak heat load periods
- Allocate heavy work activity to cooler parts of the day
- Rotate workgroups through heavy work activities
- Implement work/rest regimes

First Aid

- Ensure first aid officers are aware of how to handle heat cramps, heat exhaustion and heat stroke

Personal Health

- Maintain good hydration levels on and off shift with limited consumption of alcohol and caffeine
- Eat healthy meals and maintain good physical fitness levels
- Obtain adequate sleep to avoid fatigue
- Consider skin protection to prevent heat related skin conditions (e.g. the use of barrier cream)

Ensure you know your site medical response protocols