

DANGERS OF WORKING IN THE HEAT

By Gary Nesbit, Chair of the ACCT Insurance & Risk Management Committee

Every year, dozens of workers die and thousands more become ill while working in extreme heat or humid conditions. There is a range of heat illnesses and they can affect anyone, regardless of age or physical condition.

Protect Your Outdoor Workers this Summer

Under OSHA and concern for employees, put together a heat illness prevention program that is reviewed and discussed with all supervisors and employees. As temperature reach and exceed 80F, implement a Heat Illness Prevention training program.

- Review with supervisors and employees on how to prevent heat-related issues and the signs of:
 - Heat Exhaustion: profuse sweating, weakness, muscle cramps, headache, and nausea and vomiting. Action: provide water, breaks, and shade.
 - Heat Stress which is more serious and requires immediate action. Symptoms including visible sweating, dizziness, fainting, nausea, clumsiness, and confusion. Action: moving to a cooler location, having the person drink water, take a cool shower or use cold compresses.
 - Heat Stroke is the most serious and can lead to death. Symptoms including throbbing headache, no sweating, temperature over 103F, nausea, vomiting, rapid pulse, and loss of consciousness. Action: call 911 and cool the person quickly, as you would for Heat Stress.
- Provide workers with water, rest and shade. Allow for 10 minute breaks that allow employees to cool down every 2 hours.
- Remind workers to drink water and/or drinks with electrolytes throughout their shifts.
- Allow new or returning workers to gradually increase workloads and take more frequent breaks as they acclimatize, or build a tolerance for working in the heat.
- Mandatory buddy system or have regular contact by radio/cell phone with sole employees.
- Plan for emergencies and train workers on prevention.
- Monitor workers for signs of heat-related illness.

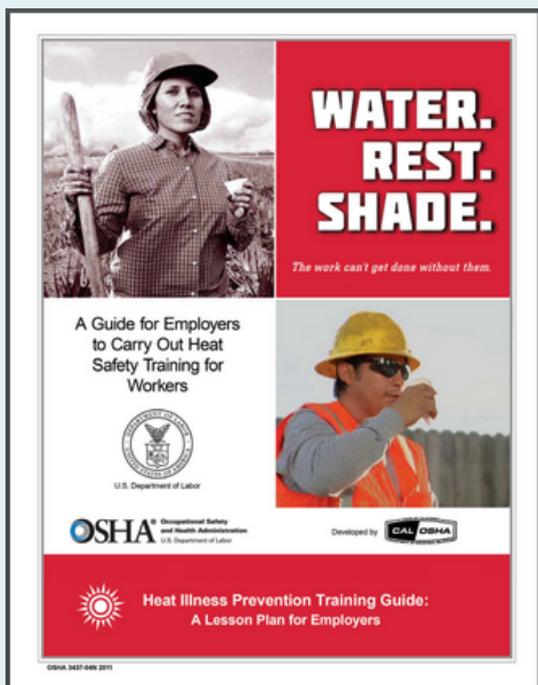
Resources

For more information and free resources including an OSHA-NIOSH Heat Safety Tool App for your supervisors and employees go to:

Smartphone App: <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/heatstress/heatapp.html>



Free Heat Safety Posters:
https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/heatillness/3431_wksiteposter_en.pdf



Free Heat Safety Training Guide:
https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/heatillness/osh_a_heattraining_guide_0411.pdf

Heat Safety Resources:
https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/heatstress/industry_resources.html