

# PREVENTING Heat-Related Illness

## TIPS for Outdoor Workers

**What are the symptoms of heat-related illness?**

### HEAT Exhaustion

- Heavy Sweating
- Weakness
- Cold, pale, clammy skin
- Nausea or vomiting
- Fainting

### HEAT Stroke

- A very high temperature (above 103°F)
- Red, hot, and dry skin (may appear wet if person was sweating from heavy work or exercise)
- Rapid or strong pulse
- Possible unconsciousness

**Do I need to be concerned about hot temperatures?**

**Yes!** When it gets hot outside, our bodies can be vulnerable to heat-related illnesses, such as heat exhaustion or heat stroke. During a period of abnormally and uncomfortable hot weather, such as days over 90 or 95 degrees, our bodies can become too hot and lose the ability to cool down. Outdoor workers are more sensitive to heat-related illnesses because they are more likely to engage in physical activities during hot weather. Their body doesn't get a chance to adapt to the warmer weather!

**What's the difference between heat exhaustion and heat stroke?**

**Heat exhaustion** is a milder form of heat-related illness, but it can easily turn into heat stroke. Heat exhaustion could happen when you are exposed to high temperatures for several days, without replacing your body's fluids and electrolyte.

A **heat stroke** could happen when your body becomes too hot and loses the ability to control its temperature. This can lead to more serious health issues, such as organ and brain damage. Heat stroke requires immediate medical attention.

### How do I protect myself on hot days?

- ☐ Drink water every 15 minutes. Don't wait until you are thirsty.
- ☐ Schedule tasks for earlier or later in the day to avoid mid-day heat.
- ☐ Wear a wide-brimmed hat and loose, lightweight, light-colored clothing.
- ☐ Wearing and reapplying sunscreen as indicated on the package can help protect you. Avoid direct sunlight.
- ☐ Spray or sponge yourself with cool water.
- ☐ Take breaks in cool, shaded areas frequently.
- ☐ Buddy up! Identifying heat related illness may be difficult. You may need medical attention but not know it, so check on a co-worker and have them do the same for you. If symptoms are recognized, seek medical attention immediately.

## Warning Signs:

*Heat  
Exhaustion*

vs.

**HEAT  
STROKE**

Heat-related illness is

***Preventable!***

Stay somewhere cool

Drink plenty of water

Avoid sugar, alcohol & caffeine

Wear light clothing

Paleness  
Tiredness  
Weakness  
Dizziness  
Headache  
Fainting  
Muscle cramps  
Heavy sweating  
Nausea or vomiting

Extremely high body  
temperature (103°F+)  
Red, hot, dry skin  
(with no sweating)  
Rapid, strong pulse  
Throbbing headache  
Dizziness  
Nausea  
Confusion  
Unconsciousness

***Watch out!***

*If left untreated,  
heat exhaustion can  
progress to*



**STOP**

If you recognize symptoms  
of heat stroke, it is  
**LIFE THREATENING.**  
Get the person somewhere  
cool and seek medical  
attention  
**IMMEDIATELY.**

Michelle L. Holshue, 2012

Data on heat-related illness via CDC:

<http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/>