



## Heat Stress – Take a Break!

**Heat illness can be deadly.** Every year, thousands of workers become sick from heat exposure on the job. Some of these [workers even die](#). **These illnesses and deaths are preventable.**

**Who is affected?** Workers exposed to hot and humid conditions are at risk of heat illness, especially those doing heavy work tasks or using bulky protective clothing and equipment. Some workers might be at greater risk than others if they have not built up a tolerance to hot conditions, are in poor physical condition, are older, or if they have heart disease, high blood pressure, or are taking certain medications.

**What is heat illness?** The body normally cools itself by sweating. During hot weather, especially with high humidity, sweating isn't enough. Body temperature can rise to dangerous levels if precautions are not taken. Heat illnesses range from heat rash and heat cramps to heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Heat stroke can result in death and requires **immediate medical attention**.

**How can heat illness be prevented?** Remember three simple words: **water, rest, shade**. Drinking water often, taking breaks, and limiting time in the heat can help prevent heat illness. Employers should include these prevention steps in worksite training and plans. Gradually build up to heavy work in hot conditions. This helps you build tolerance to the heat – or become acclimated. Employers should take steps that help workers become acclimated, especially workers who are new to working outdoors in the heat or have been away from work for a week or more. Gradually increase workloads and allow more frequent breaks during the first week of work. Also, it's important to know and look out for the symptoms of heat illness in yourself and others during hot weather. Plan for an emergency and know what to do — **acting quickly can save lives!**

Here are a few links for additional information:

OSHA Quick Card: [Protecting Workers from Heat Stress](#)

OSHA Fact Sheet: [Protecting Workers from the Effects of Heat Fact Sheet](#)

OSHA-NIOSH Heat Illness Info Sheet: [Protecting Workers from Heat Illness](#)

OSHA Safety and Health Topics Page: [Heat Stress](#)

National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Fast Facts: [Protecting Yourself from Heat Stress](#)

National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Workplace Safety and Health  
Topic: [Heat Stress](#)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\) about Extreme Heat](#)

For more information, please contact Chris Schneider, CIH at 610.524.5525 ext 14, or [cschneider@1ssh.com](mailto:cschneider@1ssh.com).

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