



Operations involving high air temperatures, radiant heat sources, high humidity, direct physical contact with hot objects, or strenuous physical activities have a high potential for inducing heat stress. When the body is unable to cool itself by sweating, several heat-induced illnesses such as heat exhaustion and the more severe heat stroke can occur, and can result in death.

Preventing Heat Stress

- Know signs/symptoms of heat-related illnesses; monitor yourself and coworkers.
- Block out direct sun or other heat sources.
- Use cooling fans/air-conditioning; rest regularly.
- Drink lots of water; about 1 cup every 15 minutes.
- Wear lightweight, light colored, loose-fitting clothes.
- Avoid alcohol, caffeinated drinks, or heavy meals.

Heat Cramps are painful spasms of the muscles, caused when workers drink large quantities of water but fail to replace their bodies' salt loss. Tired muscles (those used for performing the work) are usually the ones most susceptible to cramps. Cramps may occur during or after working hours and may be relieved by taking liquids by mouth or IV saline solutions for quicker relief, if medically required.

Heat Rash (prickly heat) may occur in hot and humid environments where sweat is not easily removed from the surface of the skin by evaporation. When extensive or complicated by infection, heat rash can be so uncomfortable that it inhibits sleep and impedes a worker's performance. It can be prevented by resting in a cool place and allowing the skin to dry.

Fainting (heat syncope) may be a problem for the worker unacclimatized to a hot environment who simply stands still in the heat. Victims usually recover quickly after a brief period of lying down. Moving around, rather than standing still, will usually reduce the possibility of fainting.

Symptoms of Heat Exhaustion

- Headaches, dizziness, lightheadedness or fainting.
- Weakness and moist skin.
- Mood changes such as irritability or confusion.
- Upset stomach or vomiting.

Symptoms of Heat Stroke

- Dry, hot skin with no sweating.
- Mental confusion or losing consciousness.
- Seizures or convulsions.

What to Do for Heat-Related Illness

- Call 911 or 255-1111 at once.
- Move the worker to a cool, shaded area.
- Loosen or remove heavy clothing.
- Provide cool drinking water.
- Fan and mist the person with water.

More Information
[OSHA Heat Stress Fact Sheet](#)
[OSHA Heat Stress Information](#)

