



OSHA ALERT

Prevent Heat Illness at Work

Outdoor and indoor heat exposure can be dangerous.

Nearly **3 out of 4 heat illness fatalities** happen during the **first week of work**. New and returning workers need to build tolerance to heat by taking frequent breaks and working shorter shifts in the heat to start.

Dangerous heat exposure can occur indoors or outdoors, in any season. Employers can keep workers safe by following these simple safety practices:

- **Follow the 20% Rule** — on the 1st day, don't allow employees to work more than 20% of a shift at full intensity in the heat. Increase their time by no more than 20% a day until they are used to working in the heat.
- **Provide cool drinking water** – encourage workers to drink at least one cup every 20 minutes, even if they are not thirsty.
- **Rest breaks** — allow workers time to recover from heat in a shady or cool location.
- **Dress for the heat** — have workers wear a hat and light-colored, loose-fitting, breathable clothing if possible.
- **Watch out for each other** — encourage workers to monitor themselves and others for signs of heat illness.
- **Look for any signs of heat illness**, including fainting, dizziness, nausea, and muscle spasms, and act quickly — when in doubt, **call 911**.
- **Offer training** on the hazards of heat exposure and how to prevent illness.
- **Develop an Emergency Action Plan** on what to do if a worker shows signs of heat-related illness.

To learn more about heat illness prevention and first aid, visit www.osha.gov/heat.

Prevent Heat Illness at Work
Outdoor and indoor heat exposure can be dangerous.

Ways to Protect Yourself and Others

- Know Your Work:** Nearly 3 out of 4 fatalities from heat illness happen during the first week of work. New and returning workers need to build tolerance to heat (gradually) and take frequent breaks. Follow the 20% Rule. On the first day, work no more than 20% of the shift's duration at full intensity in the heat. Increase the duration of time at full intensity by no more than 20% a day until workers are used to working in the heat.
- Drink Cool Water:** Drink cool water every 20 minutes, even if you're not thirsty — at least 1 cup every 20 minutes.
- Take Heat Breaks:** Use enough time to recover from heat given the temperature, humidity, and conditions.
- Find Shade or a Cool Area:** Take breaks in a designated shady or cool location.
- Dress for the Heat:** Wear a hat and light-colored, loose-fitting, and breathable clothing if possible.
- Watch Out for Each Other:** Monitor yourself and others for signs of heat illness.
- If Wearing a Face Covering:** Change your face covering if it gets wet or soiled. Verify that it allows for adequate breathing.

First Aid for Heat Illness

The following are signs of a medical emergency!

- Altered thinking or behavior
- Spurred speech
- Seizures
- Loss of consciousness

CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY!

COOL THE WORKER RIGHT AWAY WITH WATER OR ICE

STAY WITH THE WORKER UNTIL HELP ARRIVES

Watch for any other signs of heat illness and act quickly. When in doubt, call 911.

If a worker experiences: Headache or nausea, Weakness or dizziness, Heavy sweating or hot, dry skin, Elevated body temperature, Heat.

Take these actions: Give water to drink, Remove unnecessary clothing, Move to a cooler area, Cool with water, ice, or a fan, Do not leave alone, Seek medical care if needed.

For more information: 1-800-321-OSHA (6742) TTY 1-877-689-9627 www.osha.gov/heat

OSHA Occupational Safety and Health Administration

OSHA alerts are issued on occasion to draw attention to worker safety and health issues and solutions.