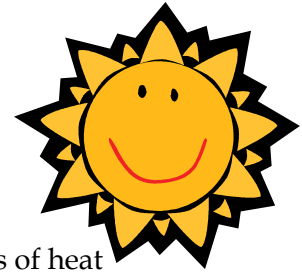




# July Safety Talk



## Heat Disorders

When you do heavy work in a hot environment—indoors or out—your temperature rises. Your body responds by:

- increasing your heart rate to move blood—and heat—away from your organs and toward your skin for cooling.
- sweating, to cool the skin, blood and the rest of your body. But when your body's cooling system can't keep up with the heat, you dehydrate and your temperature rises above 38°C. You get heat-related illnesses such as:
  - heat rash (plugged sweat glands)
  - heat cramps (sweating has caused salt loss)
  - heat exhaustion
  - heat stroke

### Heat exhaustion and heat stroke

**Heat exhaustion** is when your body cannot keep blood flowing both to vital organs and to the skin for cooling.

#### Symptoms

- weakness, feeling faint
- headache
- breathlessness
- nausea or vomiting
- difficulty continuing work.

**Treatment** Get medical aid and cool down (move to a shaded area, loosen clothing, drink cool water). It takes 30 minutes at least to cool the body down from heat exhaustion, and if it's not treated promptly, heat exhaustion can lead to heat stroke.

#### Heat stroke is a medical emergency.

You can die from it. Your body has used up all its water and salt and cannot cool itself. Your temperature rises to dangerous levels.

#### Symptoms

- confusion and irrational behaviour
- convulsions, unconsciousness
- no sweating—hot, dry skin
- high body temperature—40°C or more.

#### Treatment

If a co-worker shows symptoms of heat stroke, you should act fast.

- Call the local emergency number or get the worker to a hospital.
- Take aggressive steps to cool the worker down (immerse in a tub of cool water or cool shower, spray with a hose, wrap in cool, wet sheets and fan rapidly).

#### Controlling heat stress

- Wear light, loose clothing that allows sweat to evaporate. Light-coloured garments absorb less heat from the sun.
- Drink small amounts of water (8oz) every half hour. Don't wait until you're thirsty.
- Avoid coffee, tea, beer, or other drinks that make you urinate frequently.
- Avoid eating hot, heavy meals that increase body temperature.
- Remember that your physical condition can reduce your ability to deal with the heat. Age, weight, fitness, health conditions (heart disease or high blood pressure), recent illnesses, or medications can all affect your ability to withstand high temperatures.