

YOU CAN BEAT THE HEAT BEFORE IT BEATS YOU

DRESS FOR THE HEAT

What You Wear Matters

Working in hot conditions puts serious stress on the body. Wearing the right clothing can help prevent heat illness.

Wear clothing that is:

- Light-colored
- Lightweight
- Loose-fitting
- Breathable whenever possible

Important Reminders

- Heavy protective clothing and PPE can trap heat
- Impermeable gear increases heat stress risk
- Workers wearing protective equipment may need:
 - **More** water breaks
 - **More** rest periods
 - **More** access to shade or cooling areas

Heat Risk Increases When You:

- Work in hot and humid conditions
- Perform heavy physical labor
- Are new to the job
- Do not drink enough water

Protect Yourself and Your Crew

- Dress appropriately before the workday starts.

Adapted from the Center for Construction Research and Training's heat safety guidance (www.cpwrr.com).

WATER • REST • SHADE

The Three Keys to Heat Safety

Drink Water

- Drink 1 cup (8 ounces) of water every 15-20 minutes
- Do **NOT** wait until you are thirsty
- Avoid alcohol and limit caffeine

Take Breaks

- Take frequent breaks away from direct sunlight
- Rest in shaded or air-conditioned areas whenever possible
- Increase break frequency during extreme heat

Watch Out For Each Other

- Use a buddy system on hot days
- Check coworkers for signs of heat illness
- Speak up early if something feels wrong

Remember

- Heat illness can happen quickly, especially during physically demanding work.
- **Stay hydrated. Stay cool. Stay alive.**

Adapted from CPWR's heat safety guidance (www.cpwrr.com).

EVERY WORKER DESERVES A SAFE WORKPLACE

Heat illness prevention is a workplace safety issue.

Workers have the right to report unsafe working conditions and injuries without fear of retaliation. Federal and many state laws protect workers who raise health and safety concerns.

Protect yourself. Protect your coworkers. Speak up about unsafe conditions.

Every year, workers suffer serious injuries and deaths from heat exposure. The good news:
Heat illness is preventable.

Know the Signs. Take Action. Look Out for Each Other.

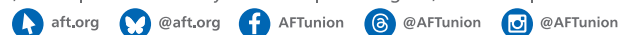
Contact and Additional Resources:

4healthandsafety@aft.org
www.aft.org/health-hub



Education | Healthcare | Public Services

AFT, AFL-CIO | 555 New Jersey Ave. N.W. | Washington, DC 20001 | www.aft.org



Education | Healthcare | Public Services

Heat Illness Can
Strike Fast

BEAT THE HEAT

Protect Workers.
Prevent Illness.
Save Lives.

KNOW THE RISKS

Who Is Most Vulnerable?

Age and Medical History

Older adults over 65, young children and individuals with underlying health conditions face a much greater risk of heat-related illness.



High-risk conditions include:

- Obesity
- Diabetes
- Heart disease
- Respiratory conditions

Medications

Some medications can make it harder for the body to cool itself or stay hydrated.



Examples include:

- Blood pressure medications
- Allergy medications
- Some mental health medications

Occupation

Outdoor workers face some of the highest risks, especially in:

- Construction
- Agriculture
- Landscaping
- Grounds Maintenance
- Warehousing

Environmental Factors

Heat risk increases when:

- Ventilation is poor
- Humidity is high
- Air movement is limited
- Workers are exposed to direct sunlight
- Urban heat island conditions are present

HEAT CAN KILL. Heat illness is preventable, but only if workers recognize the hazards early and act.

Adapted from the Washington State Department of Labor & Industries' heat stress guidance (www.lni.wa.gov/safety-health/safety-topics/topics/heat-stress).

WARNING SIGNS

Recognize Heat Illness Early

Heat Stroke

The most severe heat-related illness.

The body loses its ability to regulate temperature, causing the core temperature to rise rapidly—sometimes reaching 106 degrees within minutes.

Symptoms:

- Confusion
- Slurred speech
- Loss of consciousness
- Hot, dry skin or excessive sweating
- Seizures

Medical Emergency:

- Heat stroke can cause permanent disability or death without immediate treatment.

Heat Exhaustion

A less severe but dangerous condition caused by prolonged heat exposure.



Symptoms:

- Heavy sweating
- Weakness
- Dizziness
- Nausea or vomiting
- Fast pulse
- Cold or clammy skin
- Fainting

Heat Cramps and Heat Rash

Often caused by intense physical activity and loss of fluids and electrolytes.

Symptoms:

- Painful muscle cramps
- Red or itchy rash
- Irritated skin

TAKE EARLY WARNING SIGNS SERIOUSLY. Minor symptoms can rapidly progress into life-threatening emergencies.

Adapted from the UCLA Labor Occupational Safety and Health Program's heat illness guidance (<https://losh.ucla.edu>).

WHAT TO DO IN AN EMERGENCY

ACT FAST!

Move the Worker

Take the affected worker to a cooler area immediately.

Examples:

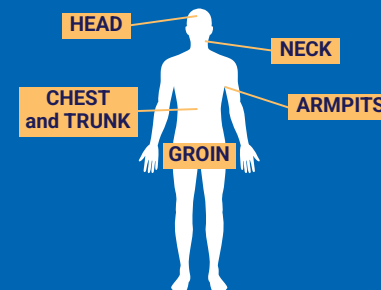
- Shade
- Air-conditioned spaces
- Cool vehicles or buildings



Cool the Worker Immediately

Use active cooling techniques:

- Immerse the worker in cold water or an ice bath
- Create an emergency ice bath using available ice and water in a large container
- Remove outer layers of clothing and heavy PPE
- Place ice or cold wet towels on the:
- Use fans to circulate air around the worker



Never Leave the Worker Alone

Heat illness can worsen rapidly. Stay with the worker and monitor their condition until help arrives.



WHEN IN DOUBT, CALL 911. Fast action saves lives.



Adapted from the Oregon Occupational Safety and Health's heat illness prevention guidance (<https://osha.oregon.gov/OSHAPubs/4926.pdf>).