

UTCA Safety Committee

Protecting Yourself from Heat Stress

Types of Heat Stress

[Heat Stroke](#) , [Heat Exhaustion](#), [Heat Syncope](#), [Heat Cramps](#) , [Heat Rash](#)



Heat Stroke

Heat stroke is the most serious heat-related disorder. It occurs when the body becomes unable to control its temperature: the body's temperature rises rapidly, the sweating mechanism fails, and the body is unable to cool down. When heat stroke occurs, the body temperature can rise to 106 degrees Fahrenheit or higher within 10 to 15 minutes. Heat stroke can cause death or permanent disability if emergency treatment is not given.

Symptoms of heat stroke include hot, dry skin or profuse sweating, hallucinations, chills, throbbing headache, high body temperature, confusion/dizziness and / or slurred speech.

Heat Exhaustion

Heat exhaustion is the body's response to an excessive loss of the water and salt, usually through excessive sweating. Workers most prone to heat exhaustion are those that are elderly, have high blood pressure, and those working in a hot environment.

Symptoms of heat exhaustion include heavy sweating, extreme weakness or fatigue, dizziness, confusion, nausea, clammy, moist skin, pale or flushed complexion, muscle cramps, slightly elevated body temperature and / or fast and shallow breathing.

Heat Syncope

Heat syncope is a fainting (syncope) episode or dizziness that usually occurs with prolonged standing or sudden rising from a sitting or lying position. Factors that may contribute to heat syncope include dehydration and lack of acclimatization.

Symptoms of heat syncope include light-headedness, dizziness, and / or fainting.

Heat Cramps

Heat cramps usually affect workers who sweat a lot during strenuous activity. This sweating depletes the body's salt and moisture levels. Low salt levels in muscles causes painful cramps. Heat cramps may also be a symptom of heat exhaustion.

Symptoms

Muscle pain or spasms usually in the abdomen, arms, or legs.

Heat Rash

Heat rash is a skin irritation caused by excessive sweating during hot, humid weather.

Symptoms of heat rash include a red cluster of pimples or small blisters more likely to occur on the neck and upper chest, in the groin, under the breasts, and in elbow creases.

Basic First Aid May Include

If Unconscious:

- Call 911 and notify their supervisor.
- Move the sick worker to a cool shaded area.
- Cool the worker using methods such as:
 - Soaking their clothes with water.
 - Spraying, sponging, or showering them with water.
 - Fanning their body.



If Conscious:

- Move the sick worker to a cool shaded area.
- Have them slowly drink plenty of water or other cool, nonalcoholic beverages.
- Have them take a cool shower, bath, or sponge bath.
- Do not return to strenuous work for a few hours after the cramps subside because further exertion may lead to heat exhaustion or heat stroke.



Seek medical attention if any of the following apply:

- The worker has heart problems.
- The worker is on a low-sodium diet.
- The cramps do not subside within one hour.

Recommendations for Workers

Workers should avoid exposure to extreme heat, sun exposure, and high humidity when possible. When these exposures cannot be avoided, workers should take the following steps to prevent heat stress:

- Wear light-colored, loose-fitting, breathable clothing such as cotton.
Avoid non-breathing synthetic clothing.
- Gradually build up to heavy work.
- Schedule heavy work during the coolest parts of day.
- Take more breaks in extreme heat and humidity.
Take breaks in the shade or a cool area when possible.
- Drink water frequently. Drink enough water that you never become thirsty. Approximately 1 cup every 15-20 minutes.
- Avoid alcohol, and drinks with large amounts of caffeine or sugar.
- Be aware that protective clothing or personal protective equipment may increase the risk of heat stress.
- Monitor your physical condition and that of your coworkers.

Source: www.cdc.gov and www.osha.gov.

Date: _____

Attended By: _____

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