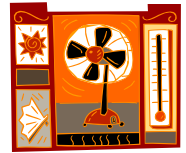


## Warm Weather Hazards

Summer is here, and outdoor workers are again being subjected to soaring temperatures and high humidity. These extremes can lead to heat stroke, a serious condition resulting from the body's failure to eliminate excessive internal heat. Sweating becomes inadequate or stops altogether and the body is unable to cool itself. The result is a dangerous, fast buildup of internal heat leading to organ dysfunction, damage, and death.

People have varying susceptibility to heat stroke. Increased age, deconditioning, alcoholism, obesity, and problems like hypertension, heart disease, or skin disease can all increase the risk.

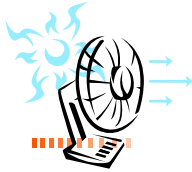
Heat stroke can be rapid and fatal. Skin becomes hot and dry. Nausea, dizziness, rapid pulse, throbbing headache, mental confusion, loss of consciousness, and seizures can all result. Body temperature can reach 105 degrees or more.



Immediate first aid is required. The heat stroke victim must be cooled quickly. The individual should be immersed in a tub of cool water, placed in a cool shower, sprayed with cool water, or fanned vigorously. Swift transfer to the emergency room is necessary, where further cooling and lifesaving measures can follow.

The best defense against heat stroke is prevention. It is important to know the hazards, recognize the warning signs, be aware of first aid procedures, and practice crucial guidelines. These are:

- Gradually acclimatize to higher temperatures. On the first day of work in hot environments, the body temperature, pulse rate, and general discomfort will be highest. But the body is remarkably adaptable. Over the course of several days to a week, changes occur. The sweat rate will increase and this will improve evaporative cooling. As the body adjusts, a worker will feel less strain and distress. However, this conditioning can be lost fairly rapidly. If a worker is away from the heat for even a week, the conditioning is usually lost and has to be regained. Workers should be exposed to heat for progressively longer periods, such as 20% exposure on day 1 with a 20% increase in length of exposure on each successive day.



- Replace fluids regularly. Fluid replacement is key in preventing heat stroke. Cool, 50-to-60 degree water should be available. Workers should be encouraged to drink small amounts frequently, such as one cup every 20 minutes. Thirst is not a sensitive indicator of true fluid needs. Workers should try to drink even when not thirsty. While commercial products containing salts are acceptable, most individuals get salt in their ordinary diets and do not require additional salt supplementation. Alcohol and caffeine contribute to dehydration and their use is discouraged.



- Wear light, loose fitting clothing to reflect the sun's heat, thus reducing heat load.
- Schedule work strategically. To reduce risks, pace the work schedule, use relief workers, take intermittent rest periods with water breaks, and perform the most strenuous work during the coolest periods of the day.
- Through awareness, common sense, and commitment, the risk of heat stroke can be minimized as we move into the hot summer months.