

SAFETY ALERT

HEAT STRESS

Our bodies naturally maintain a temperature between 36°C and 38°C. Sweating cools our bodies down, but if you work in a hot environment this might not be enough. If your body heats up faster than it can cool itself, you experience heat stress. This can lead to serious heat disorders and potential injury.

As a worker's body heats up it loses fluids and salt through sweat. As workers dehydrate they are less able to cool themselves down. Workers in a hot environment should be aware of these warning signs of heat stress:

- Excessive sweating
- Dizziness
- Nausea

If heat stress is not recognized and treated early, it can lead to heat disorders, which have serious effects on the body.

REDUCE YOUR RISK

- **Elimination or substitution** – do the job in a cooler environment
- **Engineering controls** – make physical modifications to facilities, equipment, processes to reduce exposure
- **Administrative controls** – change work practices and policies to limit the risk, determine appropriate work-rest cycles, rotate activities or use additional workers, establish cooling areas with shade and water
- **Personal Protective Equipment** – do workers have heat-reflective clothing?

PREVENTION

- Drink plenty of water (one glass every 20 minutes).
- Wear light-coloured, loose-fitting clothing made of breathable fabric, such as cotton.
- Take rest breaks in a cool, well-ventilated area.
- Do hard physical work during the coolest parts of the day, before 11 a.m. and after 3 p.m.
- Know your personal risk factors, such as medications and any pre-existing conditions.
- Check the signs and symptoms for yourself and co-workers.

ADDITIONAL WSBC RESOURCES:

[Preventing Heat Stress at Work](#)

[Sun Safety at Work: Workers](#)

[Sun Safety at Work: Employers](#)