

Using the Heat Index: A Guide for Employers

Preparing for and Responding to Heat-related Emergencies

How to Prepare for Heat-related Emergencies...

Employers should confirm that worksite emergency procedures include sufficient information to address hot weather emergencies.

- Have a plan in case a worker experiences heat-related illness.
- Make sure medical services are available and that workers know what to do if a fellow worker has signs and symptoms of heat-related illness.
- Be prepared to provide first aid for any heat-related illness and call emergency services (e.g., call 911) if a worker shows signs and symptoms of heat stroke.
- Be able to provide clear and precise directions to the worksite.
- Immediately respond to symptoms of possible heat-related illness – move the worker into the shade, loosen the clothing, wet and fan the skin, place ice-packs in the armpits and on the neck. Give the worker something to drink. Call emergency services if the worker loses consciousness or appears confused or uncoordinated. Have someone stay with an ill worker.
- Ensure that emergency procedures are used whenever appropriate.
- Develop a plan to reschedule or terminate work if conditions become too risky.

How to Respond to Heat-related Emergencies...

If workers report or supervisors observe signs or symptoms of heat-related illness, stop activity immediately. Take action while waiting for help. **HEAT STROKE IS A MEDICAL EMERGENCY. CALL 911 immediately if a worker shows any signs of heat stroke.**

Illness	Symptoms	First Aid*
Heat stroke	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Red, hot, dry skin or excessive sweating▪ Very high body temperature▪ Confusion▪ Seizures▪ Fainting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Call 911 While waiting for help: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Place worker in shady, cool area▪ Loosen clothing, remove outer clothing▪ Fan air on worker; cold packs in armpits▪ Wet worker with cool water;

		<p>apply ice packs, cool compresses, or ice if available</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide fluids (preferably water) as soon as possible ▪ Stay with worker until help arrives
Heat exhaustion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cool, moist skin ▪ Heavy sweating ▪ Headache ▪ Nausea or vomiting ▪ Dizziness ▪ Light headedness ▪ Weakness ▪ Thirst ▪ Irritability ▪ Fast heart beat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have worker sit or lie down in a cool, shady area ▪ Give worker plenty of water or other cool beverages to drink ▪ Cool worker with cold compresses/ice packs ▪ Take to clinic or emergency room for medical evaluation or treatment if signs or symptoms worsen or do not improve within 60 minutes. ▪ Do not return to work that day
Heat cramps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Muscle spasms ▪ Pain ▪ Usually in abdomen, arms, or legs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have worker rest in shady, cool area ▪ Worker should drink water or other cool beverages ▪ Wait a few hours before allowing worker to return to strenuous work ▪ Have worker seek medical attention if cramps don't go away
Heat rash	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clusters of red bumps on skin ▪ Often appears on neck, upper chest, folds of skin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Try to work in a cooler, less humid environment when possible ▪ Keep the affected area dry

* Remember, if you are not a medical professional, use this information as a guide only to help workers in need.