

# Using the Heat Index: A Guide for Employers

## Estimating Work Rates or Loads

Examples of work activities that are considered light, moderate, heavy, and very heavy:

| <b>Work Rate Category</b> | <b>Example Motions</b>  | <b>Example Tasks</b>   |
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| Rest                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Sitting</li></ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Attending a meeting (seated)</li><li>▪ Reading instructions, completing paperwork</li><li>▪ Watching a training video</li></ul>  |
| Light                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Sitting with light manual work with hands and arms</li><li>▪ Driving</li><li>▪ Standing with some light arm work and occasional walking</li><li>▪ Casual walking (2 miles per hour)</li><li>▪ Lifting 10 pounds fewer than eight times per minute, or 25 pounds less than four times per minute</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Using small bench tools or small power tools</li><li>▪ Inspecting and sorting produce</li><li>▪ Sorting light materials</li><li>▪ Assembling small parts</li><li>▪ Driving vehicle on roads</li><li>▪ Nailing</li></ul>  |
| Moderate                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Sustained moderate hand and arm work</li><li>▪ Moderate arm and leg work</li><li>▪ Moderate arm and trunk work</li><li>▪ Moderate pushing and pulling</li><li>▪ Walking at a moderate speed</li><li>▪ Lifting 10 pounds 10 times per minute, or 25 pounds six times per minute</li></ul>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Picking fruits and vegetables (bending, squatting)</li><li>▪ Painting with a brush</li><li>▪ Pushing or pulling lightweight carts or wheelbarrows</li><li>▪ Off road operation of trucks, tractors or construction equipment</li><li>▪ Operating an air hammer</li><li>▪ Weeding or hoeing</li></ul> |

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| Heavy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Intense arm and trunk work</li> <li>▪ Carrying, shoveling, manual sawing</li> <li>▪ Pushing or pulling heavy loads</li> <li>▪ Walking at a fast pace (4 miles per hour)</li> <li>▪ Lifting 10 pounds 14 times per minute, or 25 pounds 10 times per minute</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Transferring heavy materials, shoveling</li> <li>▪ Sledgehammer work</li> <li>▪ Hand mowing, digging</li> <li>▪ Concrete block laying</li> <li>▪ Pushing or pulling loaded hand carts or wheelbarrows</li> </ul> |
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| Very Heavy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Very intense activity at fast to maximum pace</li> <li>▪ Jogging, running or walking faster than 4 miles per hour</li> <li>▪ Lifting 10 pounds more than 18 times per minute, or 25 pounds more than 13 times per minute</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Heavy shoveling or digging</li> <li>▪ Ax work</li> <li>▪ Climbing stairs, ramps or ladders</li> </ul> |
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Sources:

ACGIH, 2011. Heat Stress and Strain, in TLVs and BEIs, American Conference of Industrial Hygienists, Cincinnati, OH.

Ramsey, J and Bishop, P. 2003. Hot and Cold Environments (Chapter 24), in The Occupational Environment, its Evaluation, Control, and Management (S.R. DiNardi, Editor), American Industrial Hygiene Association. [After McArdle, Katch and Katch (1996)].