

HAZARD ALERT

CPWR 
THE CENTER FOR CONSTRUCTION
RESEARCH AND TRAINING

WORKING IN THE HEAT



Am I in danger?

Thousands of U.S. workers suffer from heat-related illness every year. Over a third (38%) of heat-related workplace deaths in 2020 were among construction workers.*

You are at risk if you:

- ▶ Work in hot and humid conditions;
- ▶ Do heavy physical labor; or
- ▶ Wear personal protective equipment (PPE) or clothing that limits airflow

Other factors can increase your risk, including not being used to working in the heat, low physical fitness, and certain health conditions or medications.

Your employer is required to protect you from workplace hazards, including heat, and you can also take steps to protect yourself.

Heat stroke is the most serious heat-related illness and can quickly lead to death or permanent disability.

*U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. [2022]. Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (2011 forward) One Screen Tool. <https://www.bls.gov/iff/data.htm>

Call 911 if there are signs of

Heat Stroke:

- ▶ Confusion, altered mental status, or slurred speech
- ▶ Loss of consciousness
- ▶ Seizures
- ▶ Heavy sweating or hot, dry skin
- ▶ Very high body temperature or rapid heart rate

Call 911 if onsite medical care is unavailable for suspected **Heat Exhaustion:**

- ▶ Headache, dizziness, or lightheadedness
- ▶ Nausea or vomiting
- ▶ Weakness, irritability, or fatigue
- ▶ Thirst, heavy sweating, less urine output
- ▶ High body temperature or fast heart rate

HEAT STROKE IS A MEDICAL EMERGENCY.

When in doubt, cool the worker and call 911.

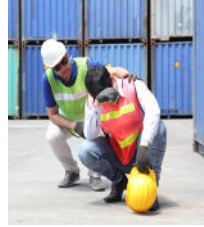
Move the worker to a cool area and have someone stay with them until help arrives. Remove excess clothing and begin cooling immediately. Submersion or other methods to wet the skin with ice water are most effective.

**If you think you
are in danger:**

Contact your supervisor.
Contact your union.
Call OSHA

1-800-321-OSHA

Protect yourself and Others!



1 Recognize and respond to heat-related illness

Report symptoms promptly to a supervisor and **know how to respond in an emergency**, including first aid, cooling procedures, and how to direct emergency responders to your location.

If you notice possible signs of heat exhaustion or heat stroke in yourself or a coworker, **begin cooling the person down and call 911 immediately.**



2 Stay hydrated

Drink 1 cup (8 oz.) of water every 15-20 minutes when working in the heat.

DO NOT wait until you are thirsty to drink water.

If sweating for several hours, drink sports drinks containing balanced electrolytes.

Avoid alcohol and drinks high in caffeine or sugar.



3 Take Breaks

Take frequent rest breaks in shaded, cooled or air-conditioned areas.

Remove personal protective equipment and extra clothing during breaks to help you cool down.

Your employer should:

- ▶ Have a written heat illness prevention program and emergency plan.
- ▶ Provide sufficient rest, shade, and fluids.
- ▶ Assess heat illness risks throughout the workday both indoors and outdoors.
- ▶ Use engineering controls to cool the work environment and reduce physical demands: for example, by insulating hot surfaces or using a forklift to transport material.
- ▶ Use work practices to reduce heat stress, like scheduling work for cooler times of the day.
- ▶ Take extra precautions to protect new workers.
- ▶ Use a buddy system and encourage workers to report symptoms of heat-related illness.
- ▶ Train supervisors and workers to recognize and prevent heat-related illness.

Learn more about heat-related illnesses and how to prevent them at

<http://bit.ly/CPWRHotWeather>

Find out more about construction hazards.

To receive copies of this Hazard Alert and cards on other topics:

**call 301-578-8500 or visit
cpwr.com/hazardalerts**

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