

HEAT STRESS HAZARDS

	Cause	Symptoms	Treatment	Prevention
Heat Rash	Occurs in hot humid weather. Sweat on the skin can not evaporate and therefore plugs the sweat glands, resulting in a rash.	Red, bumpy rash with severe itching	Change into dry clothes; avoid hot environments and rinse skin with cool water.	Wash regularly to keep skin clean and dry. Wear loose clothing made of breathable fabrics (ex: cotton).
Sunburn	Excessive exposure to the sun's rays (UV rays)	Red, painful, blistering and/or peeling skin	If the skin blisters seek medical aid. Use skin lotions (avoid topical anaesthetics) and work in the shade.	Work in the shade; avoid sun exposure especially between 10am and 4pm; cover skin with clothing; wear suntan lotions with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15. **People with fair skin should be especially cautious.
Heat Cramps	Excessive sweating causes the person to drink lots of water to compensate for the water loss but it does not replace the loss of salt (from the sweating), resulting in heat cramps. **Often occurs after vigorous exercise in extreme heat.	Painful cramps in the arms, legs or stomach which may occur during or after excessive exercise in extreme heat. **Cramps are serious because they can be a sign of other more dangerous heat induced illnesses.	Move to a cool area, loosen clothing and drink cool salted water (1tsp salt per gallon of water), or a commercial replacement beverage. If cramps are severe and don't disappear seek medical aid.	When working in the heat workers should put salt on their food (if on a low-salt diet consult with your doctor). **Don't take salt tablets.
Heat Syncope	Temporary loss of blood supply to the brain. Often occurs to people who are not used to the hot weather, or who have been standing for prolonged periods.	Dizziness or fainting after at least two hours of work, cool moist skin, weak pulse	Fainting may be due to a heart attack or other illness GET MEDICAL AID . Assess need for CPR. Move to a cool area; loosen clothing; make person lie down; if the person is conscious offer sips of cool water.	Reduce activity levels and/or heat exposure. Drink fluids regularly. Workers should check on each other to help spot the symptoms which often precede heat stroke.
Heat Exhaustion	Excessive loss of water and electrolytes as a result of profuse sweating. The body's cooling system starts to break down.	Heavy sweating, paleness, muscle cramps, tiredness, weakness, dizziness, headache, nausea or vomiting, fainting, body temperature over 38°C, cool and moist skin, fast and weak pulse and fast, shallow breathing	GET MEDICAL AID . Heat exhaustion can lead to heat stroke, which can kill. Move to a cool shaded area; loosen or remove excess clothing; provide cool water to drink (salted if possible); fan and spray with cool water	Reduce activity levels and/or heat exposure. Drink fluids regularly. Workers should check on each other to help spot the symptoms which often precede heat stroke.
Heat Stroke	The body has used up all its water and salt and stops sweating. The body is therefore unable to regulate its temperature.	Body temperature above 39.4°C, irritability, red and hot dry skin, rapid pulse, throbbing headache, dizziness, nausea, confusion, unconsciousness and weakness. In the later stages the person may pass out and have convulsions	CALL AMBULANCE . This condition can kill a person quickly. Remove excess clothing; fan and spray the person with cool water and if the person is conscious offer sips of cool water.	Reduce activity levels and/or heat exposure. Drink fluids regularly. Workers should check on each other to help spot the symptoms which often precede heat stroke.