



NEW DIRECTIONS IN BUILDING SERVICES. NEW DIRECTIONS IN BUSINESS SAFETY.

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Beat the Heat

As the weather warms up, watch out for the effects of heat stress in the workplace. These can range from simple discomfort to life threatening illness. It is important to recognise the signs in order to minimise the risk of injury or accident.

Heat stress involves six factors - temperature, humidity, air movement, radiant temperature of surroundings, clothing and physical activity.

Know what to look for:

Heat Exhaustion is the milder form of heat stress. It is characterised by:

- ▲ High heart rate
- ▲ Headache
- ▲ Confusion
- ▲ Cool or sweating skin
- ▲ Dizziness
- ▲ Loss of endurance/skill
- ▲ Nausea

To avoid heat exhaustion, individuals should cease activity immediately, rest and drink fluids. Misting or spraying with water can also help. If a person does not rapidly improve, seek medical attention.

Heat Stroke is a potentially fatal condition that may arise when individuals, who have not been identified as suffering from heat exhaustion, continue activity. Heat stroke is characterised by:

- ▲ High heart rate
- ▲ Headache
- ▲ Nausea
- ▲ Likely to collapse
- ▲ Oral temperature 40-43°C
- ▲ Dizziness
- ▲ Loss of endurance/skill
- ▲ Confusion
- ▲ Hot, dry skin (lack of sweating)

It is important to note medical attention should be sought immediately for those suffering heat stroke. Until medical help is available, cool the person down as much as possible by wetting the person's clothing, giving cool fluids and increasing air movement by fanning.

Keep cool:

Under law, employers are required to provide, where practicable, a working environment with a quality atmosphere. When dealing with heat stress, this can include insulation of heat sources, providing fans, rest areas, sunscreen, air-conditioned vehicles and protective clothing.

Employees have a responsibility to take care of their own health and safety at work as well. When heat stress is a possibility, employees can:

- ▲ Stay hydrated - Reduce the heat load by drinking 100-200ml of water or juice at frequent intervals to reduce fluid loss in sweating.
- ▲ Have rest pauses in a cool place
- ▲ Help your sweat evaporate by maintaining air circulation
- ▲ Maintain a healthy lifestyle

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