



Heat Stress – Control Hazards

Overview

There are a wide variety of jobs that expose workers to heat. Climate and weather are not always factors. Some examples of work involving heat are:

- Outdoor work in hot weather including, roofing, farming, painting, utility work, road repair, and construction.
- Foundry work or smelting.
- Brick-firing, ceramics, or glass manufacture.
- Rubber manufacture.
- Work in bakeries, confectioneries, or kitchens.
- Laundry operations.

Can personal protective equipment add to the hazard?

Sometimes workers are required to wear heavy clothing to protect against contact with hot materials or surfaces. Or, impermeable chemical protective clothing is worn which can contribute to a worker's exposure to the heat.

There are specialized types of PPE that can be worn under other types of protective clothing to cool workers. Ice vests have many pockets where ice packets can be inserted. Water-cooled garments have a battery-driven pump that circulates coolant through chambers in the clothing. Another system uses an air supply to circulate air around workers in impermeable suits.

Work practices can help control heat hazards

A more common technique that might be considered PPE is to wear wet clothing, headbands, or bandanas. This could also be considered a type of work practice control. Other work practices that help control exposure to the heat include:

- Using intermittent rest periods to recover from the heat.
- Drinking about 5 to 7 ounces of fluids every 15 to 20 minutes to replenish body fluids.
- Using relief workers.
- Using the buddy system (work in pairs) when working in hot conditions.
- Pacing the work, or reducing the physical demands of the work.
- Providing cool recovery or shaded rest areas.
- Scheduling work for cooler times of the day or when heat producing equipment isn't being operated.
- Wearing light, loose-fitting, breathable (like cotton) clothing.



Employee training

OSHA does not have a specific regulation governing exposure to heat. But, it can cite employers under the General Duty Clause when employees are overexposed to excessive heat.

Training tips

Discuss jobs in the work environment where employees may face heat stress hazards. Review specific methods and equipment that are available to control these hazards.



Sample Safety Meeting Agenda

1. ACCIDENTS, INJURIES, NEAR-MISSES, DISCUSS:

- Incidents that have occurred in your company since the last meeting.
- Any follow-up that has been done as a result of investigations into incidents.
- Incidents that have happened in other companies.
- Updates to the company's Accident Prevention Plan from "lessons learned."

2. RESULTS OF SAFETY INSPECTIONS.

- Discuss the results of recent safety inspections.
- Follow up on assignments for eliminating or controlling identified hazards.
- Encourage employees to identify any unsafe conditions or tasks.
- Discuss ways to eliminate or control the hazards.
- When appropriate, assign responsibilities for eliminating or controlling identified hazards.

3. TRAINING.

- Discuss any new safe work procedures or other policies and procedures that need to be implemented.
- Safety Topic of the Month: a presentation and discussion on the chosen topic.

4. OPEN FORUM.

- Any one who has a concern about safety and health should bring it up for discussion.

5. NEXT MEETING.

- Set the time, date, and place for the next meeting.
- Select a Safety Topic and designate the presenter/discussion leader.



Employee Sign-in Sheet

Persons attending this meeting:

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

