



SAFETY MATTERS

RISK MANAGEMENT NEWSLETTER

IN THIS ISSUE

AUGUST 2, 2024

- Heat Illness Risks
- Heat Illness Symptoms
- Preventative Measures

HEAT ILLNESS PREVENTION

OBJECTIVE To take steps to prevent heat-related illness.

Heat-related illness is preventable and can occur in indoor and outdoor workplaces. Places of employment should have an effective indoor and outdoor heat illness prevention program. Key elements of this program addresses access to drinking water, rest and cool down periods, access to shade, and emergency response procedures.

Workers who have not spent time recently in warm or hot environments and/or being physically active will need time to build tolerance (acclimatize) to the heat. During their first few days in warm or hot environments, supervisors should encourage workers to:

- Drink 8 ounces of water every 15 minutes during their shift if they are outdoors
- Do not consume alcohol; avoid coffee and caffeinated drinks
- Take frequent rest breaks in provided shade areas to cool down
- Wear proper clothing. [Remember the 3 Ls \(loose-fitting, lightweight, light-colored\)](#)
- Wear a wide-brimmed hat or keep a bandana on hand





Engineering controls such as air conditioning, with cooled air, and increased air flow, leading to increased evaporative cooling, can make the workplace safer. Another option for keeping body temperatures down in warm environments is making changes to workload and schedules. For example, empower supervisors and workers to slow down physical activity. Reduce manual handling speeds or schedule work for the morning or shorter shifts with frequent rest breaks in the shade or at least away from heat sources. Supervisors can encourage workers in warm environments to drink hydrating fluids. At a minimum, all supervisors and workers should receive training about heat-related symptoms and first aid.

HEAT ILLNESS RISKS

Heat-related illnesses can have a substantial cost to workers and employers. Heat stress can cause fine motor performance (like rebar tying or keyboarding) to deteriorate even in acclimatized individuals. Heat illness can contribute to decreased performance, lost productivity due to illness and hospitalization, and possibly death. OSHA encourages water, rest, and shade as prevention as well as treatment for heat-related illness.

HEAT ILLNESS SYMPTOMS

Identifying early signs of heat exhaustion can prevent the onset of a heatstroke, which may potentially cause serious health problems for an employee. However, heat illness is preventable if you are aware of the symptoms and take early precaution.

What are the early symptoms?

- Fatigue
- Heavy perspiration
- Headache
- Cramps
- Dizziness
- High Pulse
- Nausea/vomiting
- Weakness

Be alert and on the lookout for these symptoms in yourself and your coworkers. If you feel any symptoms, tell a coworker and supervisor immediately.

This California Schools JPA Safety Matters fact sheet is not intended to be exhaustive. The discussion and best practices suggested herein should not be regarded as legal advice. Readers should pursue legal counsel or contact their insurance providers to gain more exhaustive advice.



PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

Be alert to changes in weather. During a heat wave you are at greater risk for becoming ill and may need to take more breaks or drink more water. Drink at least one quart (4 cups) of water per hour, but no more than 12 quarts (48 cups) in a 24-hour period of fresh water. Do not wait until you are thirsty to drink water. During days of expected warm weather, plan work tasks that involve outdoor activity in the earliest part of your day and try to avoid being in direct sunlight when possible.

RESOURCES

- [National Weather - Heat Index](#)
- [Safety Academy - Heat Illness and Injury Prevention](#)
- [Supervisor Heat Safety Daily Checklist](#)
- [Model Heat illness Prevention Plan -OSHA.pdf](#)
- [Heat Illness Prevention - Employee Pocket Guide](#)
- [Cal-OSHA HIP Sample Procedures](#)
- [Cal/OSHA Heat Illness Prevention Guidance and Resources](#)

