



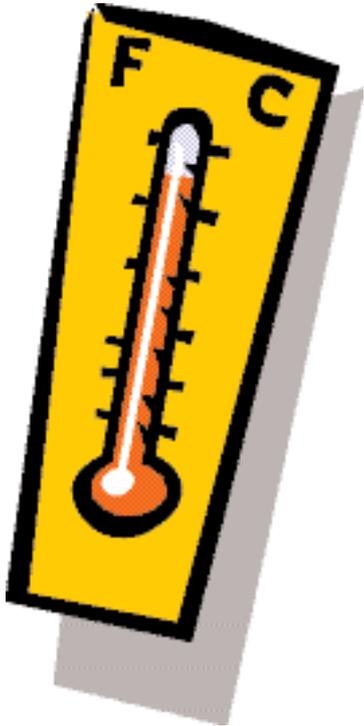
Safety Scene

It's Gettin' Hot in Here...

by Molly E. Butz

The heat is on!

Share this article with employees who may spend long hours in the heat and sun this summer.



The temperature is rising and your inclination may be to grab a cold drink, kick back, and listen to a couple verses of "Feelin' Hot, Hot, Hot." However, caution is your friend this summer as the creeping mercury lends itself to all manner of heat-related hazards.

Sun and warm weather can be dangerous for anyone working indoors or out. High air temperatures, high humidity and/or strenuous activity have the potential to cause heat stress. Several disorders can develop from heat stress. They include: heat stroke, heat exhaustion, heat cramps, heat collapse and heat rash.

Working in a component manufacturing facility can be a taxing activity. Listening to your body is critical when working hard, especially on a hot or humid day. The following information will describe the signs and symptoms of various heat-related illnesses. Keep these in mind this summer, and remember: by the time you feel thirsty, you're already dehydrated, so keep drinking water throughout the day.

We all know that the average temperature of the human body is 98.6°F. Not surprisingly, the human body wants to maintain equilibrium, and works hard to stay at 98.6°F. When the temperature outside is high, the only way to stay at 98.6 is to sweat. The evaporation of moisture on the skin creates an effective cooling machine, so sweating allows your body to cool itself and remain in the proper temperature range.

Remember: by the time you feel thirsty, you're already dehydrated, so keep drinking water throughout the day.

Sweat works properly as long as there is plenty of water in your body. If you run out of water, you run out of sweat and your body can rapidly overheat. The unfortunate truth is that overheating can happen very quickly; in fact, your body can produce 0.5 gallons of sweat every hour in a hot environment.¹

High humidity can also play a big role in heat-related illnesses. When the humidity is elevated, sweat can no longer evaporate from your skin. Either way—the lack of sweat or the inability to evaporate it—if your core body temperature rises quickly, it can be VERY dangerous and even fatal if not acted upon promptly.

Heat stroke is a medical emergency. When the body's temperature regulation fails and the body temperature rises to critical levels, roughly 106°F, heat stroke can occur. These are some of the symptoms of heat stroke:

- at a glance**
- ❑ Hot weather combined with working in a truss plant means you should drink as much water as possible.
 - ❑ Heat exhaustion is a common ailment and is easily treated. If ignored, it could be a precursor to heat stroke.
 - ❑ Heat stroke is very serious and can lead to death.

- Rapid heart rate
- Confusion or irrational behavior
- Loss of consciousness
- Dizziness
- Convulsions
- Lack of sweating

¹What Causes Heat Stroke?, www.HowStuffWorks.com/question699.htm

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Safety Scene

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- Red, hot, dry skin (the body dilates skin blood vessels to try to release heat, making the skin red)

If any of these signs are present it is important to seek professional medical treatment immediately. Remove the worker's outer clothing; wet his skin if possible. Heat stroke is very serious and can lead to death. **Never ignore the signs or symptoms of heat stroke.**

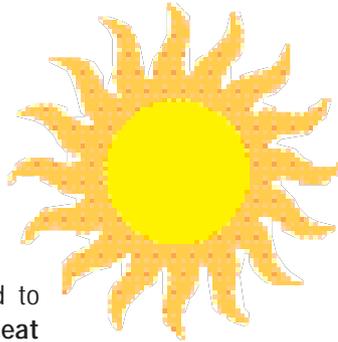
Heat exhaustion is a common ailment and should not be ignored as it is often a precursor to heat stroke. Some symptoms include:

- Headache
- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- Weakness
- Upset stomach or vomiting
- Decreased volume of or dark-colored urine
- Fainting or passing out
- Pale, clammy skin

A worker experiencing heat exhaustion will respond quickly to treatment. Remove the worker from the hot environment and begin to replace lost fluids.

Heat cramps usually occur after hard physical labor in a hot environment. Drinking plenty of water helps to prevent this.

Heat collapse occurs when the brain does not receive



Many things affect how your body will react to heat. Keep the following things in mind when working in hot conditions:

- Age
- Weight
- Level of physical fitness
- Metabolism
- Alcohol or drug use
- Certain medical conditions (e.g., hypertension)
- If you are used to working in warm weather (acclimatization)

If you need to be in the sun, be sure to consider protecting yourself with sun block, a hat and sunglasses, and always alert your supervisor or a nearby coworker if you start feeling ill. **SBC**

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enough oxygen. The easiest way to prevent heat collapse is to get used to hot weather gradually.

Heat rashes are the most common problem in hot work environments and appear in areas where the clothing is tight or restrictive. Generally, heat rashes disappear when the worker returns to a cool environment.

High Temperatures + High Humidity + Physical Work = Heat Illness

Heat illnesses can become a very serious problem, very quickly. If you need to do physical work in hot conditions, especially outside in the sun, here are some easy ways to protect yourself and your coworkers:

- Build up tolerance to the heat slowly.
- Work in pairs.
- Drink plenty of cool water.
- Wear light, breathable clothing (anything made of cotton is a good example).
- Wear a large-brimmed hat.
- Take frequent, short breaks in cool, shaded areas.
- Avoid eating large meals before working in hot environments.
- Avoid alcohol or caffeine.

If you need to be in the sun, be sure to consider protecting yourself with sun block, a hat and sunglasses, and always alert your supervisor or a nearby coworker if you start feeling ill.

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