

COMPANY SAFETY MEETING HEAT STRESS SAFETY

Working in construction already has its challenges, but when the heat rises, so do the risks. Heat stress is more than just being uncomfortable—it can be life-threatening. As of 2025, OSHA has implemented a **Heat Injury and Illness Prevention Standard** designed to protect workers in high-temperature environments, and it's crucial that every one of us understands how to recognize and prevent heat-related illnesses.

Heat stress occurs when the body can't cool itself fast enough, leading to conditions like **heat rash**, **heat cramps**, **heat exhaustion**, and the most dangerous—**heat stroke**. These conditions aren't limited to record-breaking summer days. High humidity, direct sun exposure, lack of acclimatization, and physically demanding work can all contribute, even on moderately warm days.

OSHA's 2025 standard requires employers in high-heat industries, like construction, to implement heat illness prevention programs that include hydration access, shaded or cool-down areas, monitoring protocols, and structured acclimatization periods for new or returning workers. Here at our job sites, that means we are required to take **preventive action at a heat index of 80°F**, with **mandatory controls at 90°F** and higher.

Understanding the symptoms of heat-related illness can save lives. Here's what to look for:

- **Heat rash:** Small red bumps or blisters, often in skin folds, caused by blocked sweat ducts.
- **Heat cramps:** Painful muscle cramps, usually in legs or abdomen, caused by fluid and electrolyte loss.
- **Heat exhaustion:** Heavy sweating, dizziness, weakness, headache, nausea, cool and clammy skin. The person may appear pale or confused.
- **Heat stroke** (a medical emergency): Hot, dry skin (may stop sweating), confusion, fainting, seizures, or even loss of consciousness. Immediate cooling and 911 intervention are required.
- To help prevent these conditions, OSHA's updated guidance emphasizes proactive steps. As workers, we all have responsibilities to look out for ourselves and each other. Preventative measures include:
 - **Hydrate frequently:** Drink at least 8 oz. of water every 15–20 minutes—*do not wait until you feel thirsty.*
 - **Take scheduled rest breaks:** Use shaded or air-conditioned areas during breaks. These are now required under the 2025 standard during high-heat periods.
 - **Wear appropriate clothing:** Lightweight, light-colored, and breathable clothing helps your body cool more efficiently.
 - **Eat light meals:** Heavy meals can increase internal body temperature.
 - **Use a buddy system:** Watch for signs of heat stress in coworkers, especially those who are new or returning to work.

Report symptoms immediately: If you or someone else starts to feel the early signs of heat illness, notify supervision and seek shade or medical assistance without delay. Additionally, all workers who are new or returning after a week or more off work will have to take time to become acclimated to the heat and gradually increase exposure to hot conditions over several days. This is a key part of the new standard and is critical to reducing incidents. Heat stress is preventable—but only if we take it seriously.

HEAT EXHAUSTION OR HEAT STROKE?

HEAT EXHAUSTION SYMPTOMS

1. Faint or dizzy
2. Excessive sweating
3. Cool, pale, clammy skin
4. Nausea, vomiting
5. Rapid, weak pulse
6. Muscle cramps

HOW TO TREAT IT

1. Move to cooler location
2. Drink water
3. Take a cool shower or use cold compresses

HEAT STROKE SYMPTOMS

1. Throbbing headache
2. No sweating
3. Body temp above 103°
Red, hot, dry skin
4. Nausea, vomiting
5. Rapid, strong pulse
6. May lose consciousness

HOW TO TREAT IT

1. Get emergency help
2. Keep cool until treated

**COMPANY SAFETY MEETING
HEAT STRESS SAFETY**

SUPERINTENDENT: _____ **FOREMAN:** _____

PROJECT: _____ **WORK AREA:** _____ **DATE:** _____

INSTRUCTOR SIGNATURE: _____ **TITLE:** _____

<u>PRINT</u>	<u>SIGN</u>
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
6.	6.
7.	7.
8.	8.
9.	9.
10.	10.
11.	11.
12.	12.
13.	13.
14.	14.
15.	15.

JOB HAZARD ANALYSIS (JHA)

MAJOR TASKS TO COMPLETE	HAZARDS INVOLVED	CONTROL MEASURES