



UFCW OSH Office, 1775 K Street NW, Washington DC, 20006, (202) 223-3111,
safety@ufcw.org

HOT WEATHER ADVISORY Preventing Heat Stress at Work

With outside temperatures starting to soar, now is the time to make sure employers are taking the steps necessary to protect workers from heat stress and heat-related illness.

Heat can cause more than just discomfort. Exposure to high heat and high humidity can be life threatening. Employers should make sure workers know the signs, symptoms and appropriate first-aid procedures for serious heat illnesses.

Preventing Heat Illness: What employers should be doing:

- Provide adequate amount of drinking water. – as much as one quart per worker per hour. Provide EASY access to this water!! Providing liquids like Gatorade, with electrolytes in it, is also important to replace what is lost through sweat.
- Provide regular rest breaks or rest periods. Rest breaks should be taken in a cool area. Employers should provide rest breaks in accordance with how hot the work environment is, and how heavy the work load. Workers in hotter work environments and with heavier work loads should be provided with more frequent rest breaks.
- Increase the air circulation. Use air conditioning, fans and general ventilation to cool down the work area and cool off workers.
- Alert workers to the early signs of heat-related illness. Allow workers who experience these early signs to take a break. Heat-related illnesses can come on very rapidly and can be fatal.
- New, or unacclimatized workers should not be allowed to work full-time, right away, in a high heat area. It takes about one week for the body to adjust to working in the heat.

For more information about heat and heat-related illness, you can contact the UFCW Occupational Safety and Health Office in Washington, D.C. at 202-223-3111.

Two major heat-related illnesses are heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Heat exhaustion, if left untreated, may progress to deadly heat stroke.

What are the symptoms of heat exhaustion and heat stroke?

Heat Exhaustion	Heat Stroke
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Heavy sweating• Exhaustion, weakness• Fainting/Lightheadedness• Paleness• Headache• Clumsiness, dizziness• Nausea or vomiting• Irritability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sweating may or may not be present• Red or flushed, hot dry skin• Any symptoms of heat exhaustion but more severe• Confusion / Bizarre behavior• Convulsions before or during cooling• Collapse• Panting/rapid breathing• Rapid, weak pulse• Note: may resemble a heart attack