

Recognizing the Signs of Heat Stress

Introduction

Heat strain can affect indoor and outdoor workers when heat from the environment, exertion, and clothing exceeds the body ability to cool. Illness can develop rapidly and does not always follow a predictable sequence.

Hazards & Controls

Watch for headache, dizziness, weakness, nausea, heavy sweating, or unusual fatigue. Stop work, move to a cool place, notify the supervisor, and have someone stay with the affected worker. Obtain medical assessment under the emergency plan; do not send an ill worker away alone.

Confusion, slurred speech, seizures, collapse, or loss of consciousness can signal heat stroke. Call 911 and start rapid cooling while help is coming. Sweating may still be heavy; do not wait for dry skin or a temperature reading to act. Never give drinks to someone not fully alert or unable to swallow safely.

Follow the employer's temperature-stress prevention and emergency procedures for the actual job and conditions. These awareness notes do not replace required training, individualized medical advice, or an exposure assessment.

Safety Reminders

Use buddy checks and report symptoms early. Stop and seek a safe recovery area when needed. Know how to summon emergency help and never leave an ill or injured worker alone.

Engagement Questions

Which signs require immediate emergency action, even if the person is still sweating?

What site-specific hazards or changes would make us stop work?

Sources and use notice

OSHA: Heat Exposure

CDC/NIOSH: Heat-Related Illnesses

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Meeting Record & Sign-In

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Jobsite: _____ Presenter: _____

Time / duration: _____ Crew / shift: _____

Site-specific hazards and controls discussed

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Follow-up action / responsible person / due date

Preventing Heat Exhaustion and Heat Stroke

Introduction

Prevent heat illness with an employer plan that combines exposure assessment, engineering controls, acclimatization, water, rest, and effective emergency arrangements. Hydration alone cannot make an excessive heat load safe.

Hazards & Controls

Reduce heat and physical demands where feasible, schedule strenuous tasks for cooler periods, and provide nearby cool recovery areas. Monitor workers and conditions, especially new or returning workers. Stop at symptoms instead of trying to finish the task.

For suspected heat stroke, call 911, stay with the worker, move to a cool area, and cool immediately. Use cold-water immersion when safely available under the response plan, or wet skin and clothing, apply cold wet cloths or ice, and circulate air. Safely remove outer clothing or PPE to aid cooling, managing other hazards. Do not give fluids to an altered or unconscious person.

Follow the employer's temperature-stress prevention and emergency procedures for the actual job and conditions. These awareness notes do not replace required training, individualized medical advice, or an exposure assessment.

Safety Reminders

Use buddy checks and report symptoms early. Stop and seek a safe recovery area when needed. Know how to summon emergency help and never leave an ill or injured worker alone.

Engagement Questions

Who calls emergency services, who starts cooling, and where is our cooling equipment?

What site-specific hazards or changes would make us stop work?

Sources and use notice

OSHA: Heat Exposure

OSHA: Heat Illness and First Aid

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Hydration and Nutrition in Hot Conditions

Introduction

Provide cool, potable water close to the work and encourage frequent small drinks before thirst. Fluid and nutrition plans must account for the workload, duration, sweating, health needs, and recovery conditions.

Hazards & Controls

NIOSH guidance for moderate activity in heat lasting under two hours is about one 8-ounce cup of water every 15-20 minutes. For several hours of sweating, balanced electrolyte drinks may be useful. Regular meals also help replace electrolytes. Follow individualized medical advice for fluid or salt restrictions.

Do not force excessive drinking: NIOSH generally advises no more than six cups of total fluid per hour. Electrolyte drinks do not prevent overhydration. Avoid alcohol and drinks high in caffeine or sugar; do not use salt tablets unless medically directed. Water is not a substitute for cooling and rest.

Follow the employer's temperature-stress prevention and emergency procedures for the actual job and conditions. These awareness notes do not replace required training, individualized medical advice, or an exposure assessment.

Safety Reminders

Use buddy checks and report symptoms early. Stop and seek a safe recovery area when needed. Know how to summon emergency help and never leave an ill or injured worker alone.

Engagement Questions

How will we keep water available and avoid both dehydration and excessive fluid intake?

What site-specific hazards or changes would make us stop work?

Sources and use notice

OSHA: Heat Exposure

CDC/NIOSH: Workplace Heat Recommendations

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Acclimatization - Adjusting to Hot Work Environments

Introduction

Repeated, gradual heat exposure helps the body adapt. New workers and workers returning after time away need a supervised plan suited to the actual job, protective clothing, and conditions; prior experience is not a guarantee of tolerance.

Hazards & Controls

NIOSH recommends gradually increasing heat exposure over 7-14 days. For new workers, start at no more than 20% of the usual duration in heat on day one, increasing by no more than 20% each additional day. This is guidance for a monitored plan, not permission to increase despite symptoms.

Provide lighter work and more frequent cool recovery breaks as needed. Reassess after absences, illness, hotter conditions, or PPE changes. Acclimatized workers can still become ill. Air-conditioned breaks do not undo acclimatization; never withhold cooling to force adaptation.

Follow the employer's temperature-stress prevention and emergency procedures for the actual job and conditions. These awareness notes do not replace required training, individualized medical advice, or an exposure assessment.

Safety Reminders

Use buddy checks and report symptoms early. Stop and seek a safe recovery area when needed. Know how to summon emergency help and never leave an ill or injured worker alone.

Engagement Questions

Who needs acclimatization or reacclimatization, and how will progress be monitored?

What site-specific hazards or changes would make us stop work?

Sources and use notice

OSHA: Heat Exposure

CDC/NIOSH: Acclimatization

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Acclimatization - Adjusting to Hot Work Environments

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Clothing and PPE for Hot Weather

Introduction

Clothing and PPE can trap heat and limit evaporation. Choose equipment that meets the assessed safety hazards while including its added heat load in the work and recovery plan.

Hazards & Controls

Use lighter, breathable clothing only where compatible with the job. Flame, arc, chemical, electrical, and visibility requirements still govern selection. Do not substitute ordinary moisture-wicking fabric for required protective clothing or use vented head protection where its rating is unsuitable.

Use only approved compatible cooling accessories, shade, and recovery arrangements. If heat becomes unsafe, stop and move to a safe recovery area rather than continue exposed without protection. During a heat emergency, safely remove obstructive outer clothing or PPE as the response plan permits; never delay lifesaving cooling.

Follow the employer's temperature-stress prevention and emergency procedures for the actual job and conditions. These awareness notes do not replace required training, individualized medical advice, or an exposure assessment.

Safety Reminders

Use buddy checks and report symptoms early. Stop and seek a safe recovery area when needed. Know how to summon emergency help and never leave an ill or injured worker alone.

Engagement Questions

How does this PPE change our heat load, and where can it be safely removed for recovery?

What site-specific hazards or changes would make us stop work?

Sources and use notice

OSHA: Heat Exposure

OSHA: Personal Risk Factors and PPE

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Clothing and PPE for Hot Weather

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Recognizing and Preventing Cold Stress

Introduction

Cold, wind, wet clothing, and contact with cold surfaces increase heat loss. Hypothermia can occur above freezing when a person is chilled by rain, sweat, or immersion; cold injury is not limited to snow or extreme winter weather.

Hazards & Controls

Plan shelter, warm recovery breaks, dry spare clothing, suitable layers, and a buddy system. Adjust work to reduce prolonged exposure and excess sweating. Keep workers out of cold water and use the required protection around immersion hazards.

Report shivering, numbness, fatigue, fumbling, or loss of coordination promptly and move to shelter. Confusion, slurred speech, or unusual drowsiness requires urgent medical action. Stopping shivering is not proof of recovery. Do not leave an affected person alone.

Follow the employer's temperature-stress prevention and emergency procedures for the actual job and conditions. These awareness notes do not replace required training, individualized medical advice, or an exposure assessment.

Safety Reminders

Use buddy checks and report symptoms early. Stop and seek a safe recovery area when needed. Know how to summon emergency help and never leave an ill or injured worker alone.

Engagement Questions

What wet or windy conditions could make this job colder than the thermometer suggests?

What site-specific hazards or changes would make us stop work?

Sources and use notice

OSHA: Winter Weather

CDC/NIOSH: Cold and Work

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Recognizing and Preventing Cold Stress

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Hypothermia Awareness and Response

Introduction

Hypothermia is a medical emergency in which core temperature drops dangerously, commonly below 95 F. Shivering, clumsy movement, confusion, slurred speech, and drowsiness are warning signs; do not wait for a thermometer reading or for shivering to stop.

Hazards & Controls

Call 911 for suspected hypothermia and follow dispatcher instructions. Handle the person gently, move to shelter, remove wet clothing, and insulate with dry layers including the head and neck. Warm the center of the body safely; avoid direct intense heat, rubbing, or aggressive movement.

Only offer a warm nonalcoholic drink if the person is fully alert and can swallow safely. Stay with them and monitor breathing. If unresponsive and not breathing normally, follow dispatcher guidance and your CPR/AED training. Do not assume a severely cold person cannot be resuscitated.

Follow the employer's temperature-stress prevention and emergency procedures for the actual job and conditions. These awareness notes do not replace required training, individualized medical advice, or an exposure assessment.

Safety Reminders

Use buddy checks and report symptoms early. Stop and seek a safe recovery area when needed. Know how to summon emergency help and never leave an ill or injured worker alone.

Engagement Questions

How will we summon help, provide shelter, and keep an affected worker safely warm?

What site-specific hazards or changes would make us stop work?

Sources and use notice

OSHA: Winter Weather

CDC: Hypothermia Recognition and Response

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Hypothermia Awareness and Response

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Frostbite and Cold-Related Injuries

Introduction

Frostbite freezes skin and deeper tissue, often at the fingers, toes, nose, or ears. Numbness, pale or gray skin, and a firm or waxy feel are warning signs. Wet cold can also cause nonfreezing injuries such as trench foot.

Hazards & Controls

Get to shelter and obtain prompt medical care for suspected frostbite. Check for hypothermia, which needs immediate emergency attention. Protect injured areas with loose, dry coverings and avoid walking on affected feet unless necessary for safety.

Do not rub, massage, use snow, or apply direct heat such as a stove or heating pad. Follow medical guidance for rewarming; do not thaw tissue if it could refreeze. Warm-water rewarming must use a controlled, safe temperature and the appropriate care plan. Do not break blisters or return numb tissue to exposure.

Follow the employer's temperature-stress prevention and emergency procedures for the actual job and conditions. These awareness notes do not replace required training, individualized medical advice, or an exposure assessment.

Safety Reminders

Use buddy checks and report symptoms early. Stop and seek a safe recovery area when needed. Know how to summon emergency help and never leave an ill or injured worker alone.

Engagement Questions

How will we protect an injured area and prevent refreezing during evacuation?

What site-specific hazards or changes would make us stop work?

Sources and use notice

OSHA: Winter Weather

CDC/NIOSH: Cold-Related Illnesses

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Frostbite and Cold-Related Injuries

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Layering and PPE for Cold Environments

Introduction

Use a clothing system that manages moisture, provides insulation, and blocks wind or precipitation as needed. It must remain compatible with required task-specific PPE and allow safe movement, visibility, and communication.

Hazards & Controls

Choose a suitable moisture-managing base layer, insulating middle layers, and protective outer shell. Wet cotton can retain moisture and increase chilling; select materials appropriate to all job hazards, including flame or arc exposure. Replace wet garments promptly and adjust layers before heavy sweating develops.

Protect the head, hands, and feet without overly tight gloves, socks, or footwear that restrict circulation. Check traction and dexterity. Do not place unapproved liners or headwear under a hard hat, obstruct a respirator seal, or let loose layers create an entanglement hazard.

Follow the employer's temperature-stress prevention and emergency procedures for the actual job and conditions. These awareness notes do not replace required training, individualized medical advice, or an exposure assessment.

Safety Reminders

Use buddy checks and report symptoms early. Stop and seek a safe recovery area when needed. Know how to summon emergency help and never leave an ill or injured worker alone.

Engagement Questions

Which clothing or PPE adjustments improve warmth without reducing required protection?

What site-specific hazards or changes would make us stop work?

Sources and use notice

OSHA: Winter Weather

OSHA: Cold Stress Guide

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Balancing Work-Rest Cycles in Extreme Temperatures

Introduction

A safe work-rest plan accounts for environmental conditions, workload, protective clothing, worker adaptation, and recovery areas. A fixed schedule based only on air temperature cannot address every heat or cold hazard.

Hazards & Controls

Have qualified site personnel set and adjust the schedule. Heat assessment may use wet-bulb globe temperature (WBGT), clothing adjustments, and workload; a weather-app heat index is not a complete task assessment. Cold planning must consider wind, wetness, contact exposure, and the need for warm-up breaks.

Provide accessible cool or warm recovery areas, water, and dry clothing as needed. Reduce exposure and increase recovery when demands rise. Workers with symptoms stop immediately rather than wait for a scheduled break. Reassess changing weather, PPE, staffing, and illness; stop work if controls cannot keep conditions safe.

Follow the employer's temperature-stress prevention and emergency procedures for the actual job and conditions. These awareness notes do not replace required training, individualized medical advice, or an exposure assessment.

Safety Reminders

Use buddy checks and report symptoms early. Stop and seek a safe recovery area when needed. Know how to summon emergency help and never leave an ill or injured worker alone.

Engagement Questions

What changes require more recovery time or stopping this task entirely?

What site-specific hazards or changes would make us stop work?

Sources and use notice

OSHA: Winter Weather

CDC/NIOSH: Heat Work Schedules

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