

Warehouses and Heat Stress: What to Know

Heat stress is deadly. Know the symptoms and signs.

Heat stress is a condition that arises from long exposure to high temperatures, particularly when accompanied by increased humidity levels. The symptoms of heat stress can range from mild symptoms, such as heat cramps, to more severe conditions, including heat stroke, which requires immediate medical attention.

Warehouses can contribute to heat stress, particularly when they have poor ventilation systems, lack air conditioning or have crowded working areas. Warehouse workers are especially at risk when working long hours with heavy physical activity.



Remember: Heat stress does not always require very high temperatures. People who are not used to working in heat (not acclimatized), are taking certain medications, or have other health issues may experience heat stress before other workers do. Since heat stress has various signs and symptoms, recognizing it early is key.

What is acclimatization? Acclimatization means allowing your body to gradually adapt to higher levels of heat.

Symptoms of heat stress

The symptoms of heat stress can resemble those of other medical conditions, making it crucial to pay attention to your body's signals. If you are unwell, it is important to seek help. This means cooling down, drinking water, and having someone watch you carefully and call a doctor if needed.

Common symptoms of heat stress



Heavy sweating



Increased heart rate



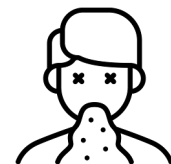
Nausea



Lightheadedness



Dizziness



Vomiting

It is important to seek medical care if you are experiencing any symptoms of heat stress. If symptoms of heat exhaustion are unaddressed they can quickly progress to **heat stroke**, which may include confusion, fainting, seizures, and increased body temperature. Heat stroke can lead to death.

➔ If someone is showing signs of heat stroke, call 911!

Recommendations for employers

- Use air conditioning, fans or other means to keep indoor temperatures at a safe level.
- Train workers on indoor heat stress and proper workplace practices to ensure they can recognize and respond effectively to heat-related emergencies.
- Encourage employees working in heat to take frequent, short breaks in cool, shady areas.
- Allow employees to acclimate gradually to hot working environments to enhance their ability to cope with heat stress.
- Provide proper means of hydration.
- Ventilate the working space.

Recommendations for workers

- Ask to be acclimated to a hot working environment.
- Take breaks when necessary.
- Properly hydrate.
- Recognize symptoms of heat stress.
- Speak up about any hazardous and dangerous working conditions.

Know your rights



You have the right to speak up about hazards at work without fear of retaliation or backlash.



If you are affected by heat-related illness, promptly seek medical care to document your exposure to the heat. This is important for a successful Worker's Compensation Claim.



Contact OSHA to learn more or file a complaint. 1-800-321-OSHA or online at www.osha.gov/workers/file-complaint

