

2021—3rd Quarter Newsletter

PROTECTING WORKERS FROM HEAT ILLNESS -

As temperatures rise, workers may be required to work in hot environments for extended periods of time. When the body is unable to maintain a normal temperature, heat illnesses can occur and may result in death. In the following pages, we will provide information to employers and measures they should take to prevent heat-related illnesses and death.

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OSHA-NIOSH Heat Safety Tool App

The OSHA-NIOSH Heat Safety Tool is a useful resource for planning outdoor work activities based on how hot it feels throughout the day. Featuring real-time heat index and hourly forecasts, specific to your location, as well as occupational safety and health recommendations from OSHA and NIOSH.

Key Considerations for Using the App

- Heat index (HI) values were created for shady, light wind conditions, so exposure to full sunshine can increase heat index values by up to 15°F.
- The simplicity of the HI makes it a good option for many outdoor work environments (as long as there are no additional radiant heat sources, such as, fires or hot machinery). However, if you have the ability, NIOSH recommends using wet bulb globe temperature (WBGT)-based Recommended Exposure Limits (RELs) and Recommended Alert Limits (RALs) in hot environments.
- Use of the HI or WBGT is important, but other factors such as strenuous physical activity also cause heat stress among workers. Employers should have a robust heat stress prevention program that ensures workers are protected.
- NIOSH and OSHA are currently considering new scientific data related to the HI levels, and considering how to best incorporate the evolving science. It is important to regularly download updates to ensure you are using the latest version of the app.



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Factors That Increase Risk to Workers

- High Temperature and humidity
- Direct Sun exposure (with no shade)
- Indoor exposure to other sources of radiant heat (ovens/furnaces)
- Limited air movement (no breeze)
- Low fluid consumption
- Physical exertion
- Heavy personal protective clothing and equipment
- Some medications (blood pressure pills or antihistamines, etc.)
- Pregnancy
- Lack of recent exposure to hot working conditions
- Previous heat-related illness
- Advanced age (65+)

Health Problems Caused by Hot Environments

Heat Stroke can be deadly. Heat stroke occurs when the body's temperature regulation system fails and body temperature rises to critical levels.

Symptoms:

- Confusion
- Loss of consciousness
- Seizures
- Very high body temperature
- Hot, dry skin or profuse sweating

If a worker shows signs of possible heat stroke:

- **Heat stroke is a life-threatening emergency! While first aid measures are being implemented, call 911 and get emergency medical help.**
- **Make sure that someone stays with the worker until help arrives.**
- Move the worker to a shaded, cool area and remove outer clothing.
- Wet the worker with cool water and circulate the air to speed cooling.
- Place wet cloths of ice all over the body or soak the worker's clothing with cold water.

Heat Exhaustion is the next most serious heat related health problem.

Symptoms:

- Headache
- Nausea
- Dizziness
- Weakness
- Irritability
- Thirst
- Heavy Sweating
- Elevated body temperature
- Decreased urine output

If a worker shows signs of possible heat exhaustion:

- Worker should be taken to clinic or ER for medical attention
- If medical attention is not available, **call 911 immediately**
- Make sure that someone stays with the worker until help arrives
- Remove worker from hot area and give liquids to drink
- Remove unnecessary clothing including shoes and socks.
- Cool the worker with cold compresses to the head, face and neck or have worker wash these areas with cold water.
- Encourage frequent sips of cool water. If the worker is unable to drink, get emergency help immediately.



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Heat Cramps are muscle pains usually caused by physical labor in a hot work environment. Heat cramps are caused by the loss of body salts and fluid during sweating.

If a worker shows signs of possible heat cramps:

Workers should replace fluid loss by drinking water and having a snack, and/or carbohydrate-electrolyte replacement liquids (e.g., sports drinks) every 15-20 minutes.

Workers should avoid salt tablets.

Get medical help if the worker has heart problems, is on a low sodium diet, or if cramps do not subside within one hour.

Heat Rash is the most common problem in hot work environments. Heat rash is caused by sweating and looks like a red cluster of pimples or small blisters. Heat rash usually appears on the neck, upper chest, in the groin, under the breasts and in elbow creases.

If a worker shows signs of possible heat rash:

The best treatment for heat rash is to provide a cooler, less humid work environment.

Rash area should be kept dry.

Powder may be applied to increase comfort.

Ointments and creams should NOT be used on heat rash.

Recommendations for Outdoor Work

Monitor weather reports daily and reschedule jobs with high heat exposure to cooler times of the day. Be extra vigilant during heat waves when air temperatures rise above normal. When possible, routine maintenance and repair projects should be scheduled for the cooler seasons of the year. ◇

For more information about protecting workers from heat related illness visit:

- OSHA online at: www.osha.gov/SLTC/heatstress/index.html and www.osha.gov/dts/osta/otm/otm_iii/otm_iii_4.html
- NIOSH online at: <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/heatstress/english.html>

OSHA: Employers may relax COVID-19 measures in fully vaccinated workplaces

Construction Dive— June 14, 2021

Brief:

- ◆ Most employers “no longer need to take steps to protect their workers from COVID-19 exposure in any workplace, or well-defined portions of a workplace, where all employees are fully vaccinated,” [“OSHA said in guidance update.”](#)
- ◆ The agency also published an [emergency temporary standard](#) for U.S. healthcare employers. Employers included in the emergency temporary standard’s definition must develop and implement a plan to protect employees from COVID-19 in the workplace, and they must designate one or more workplace COVID-19 safety coordinators to implement and monitor their plans.
- ◆ OSHA’s updated guidance for all industries, meanwhile, encourages employers to grant paid time off for employees to get vaccinated. Employers also should implement physical distancing for unvaccinated and other at-risk workers in communal work areas, including limiting the number of such workers in one place at any given time.

The updated guidance may help to resolve some of the questions employers had following a May update from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that, with some restrictions, fully vaccinated individuals could resume activities without wearing a mask. Last month, OSHA directed employers to follow [CDC’s guidance](#) on mask use and social distancing for fully vaccinated workers.

In a statement emailed to Construction Dive, Associated General Contractors of America President Stephen Sandherr said that the fact the final standard only applies to healthcare settings is a “significant victory” for the construction industry. The association had long questioned the need for an ETS for construction, saying the widespread availability of the COVID-19 vaccine and the industry’s coronavirus safety protocols negated the need for a nationwide standard. ◇

FIREWORKS SAFETY AND YOU

Setting off your own fireworks may not seem like a big deal, but do you know how many people are injured every year using them?

"Fireworks were involved with an estimated 10,000 injuries treated in U.S. hospital emergency departments during calendar year 2019", the Consumer Product Safety Commission says. Of those, 36% were children younger than 15.

"An estimated 900 emergency department-treated injuries were associated with sparklers and 400 with bottle rockets," the CPSC says.

It's safest by far to leave the fireworks displays to the pros. But if you're going to buy your own, the National Safety Council has tips:

- ◇ Never allow young children to handle fireworks. Older children only under close adult supervision.
- ◇ Never use fireworks while using alcohol or drugs.
- ◇ Never hold lighted fireworks in your hand
- ◇ Don't light fireworks indoors.
- ◇ Only light one firework at a time and maintain distance .
- ◇ Never hit or throw fireworks at another person.
- ◇ Never light fireworks in a container.
- ◇ Don't try to relight or handle malfunctioning fireworks.
- ◇ Soak both spent and unused fireworks in water before discarding.
- ◇ Keep a bucket of water nearby to distinguish fireworks that don't go off.
- ◇ Never use illegal fireworks.

"Better yet, grab a blanket and a patch of lawn, kick back and let the experts handle the fireworks show," the NSC says. ◇

Sparklers: The Risk to Children are Real

"Some people treat sparklers much too casually," says Gina Duchossois of Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. "They allow children to play with them as if they were toys. But sparklers burn at an extremely high heat: 1,200 degrees F.-hot enough to melt some metals. The sparks can cause burns and eye injuries, and touching a lit sparkler to skin can result in serious burn."

If you think your children are mature enough to use sparklers safely, only let them do so under close adult supervision. Do not allow any running or horseplay while they are using sparklers.

DOMESTIC TRAVEL RECOMMENDATIONS QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE



CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19)

Domestic Travel

RECOMMENDATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

Not Vaccinated

Fully Vaccinated

Get tested 1-3 days before travel



Get tested 3-5 days after travel and self-quarantine for 7 days. Self-quarantine for 10 days if you don't get tested.



Self-monitor for symptoms



Wear a mask and take other precautions during travel



[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

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Protecting Workers from Heat Illness (pg. 1)

<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2011-174/pdfs/2011-174.pdf?id=10.26616/NIOSH-PUB2011174>

OSHA: Employers may relax COVID-19 Measures (pg 3)

<https://www.constructiondive.com/news/osha-employers-may-relax-covid-19-measures-in-fully-vaccinated-workplaces/601694/>

Fireworks Safety and You (pg.4)

<https://www.safetyandhealthmagazine.com/articles/21195-fireworks-safety-and-you>

Sparklers: The Risk to Children are Real

<https://www.chop.edu/news/health-tip/fireworks-and-sparklers-risks-children-are-real>

Links found in this issue