

HEAT STRESS

Heat stress is not just about temperature. There are several factors that contribute to heat stress, and most importantly we need to recognize that these factors will affect people differently.

WHAT IS HEAT STRESS?

Heat stress is the overall effect of heat on your body. It is caused by the combination of:

- The heat your body is generating
- Environmental factors (air temperature, humidity, air movement and radiant heat)
- Clothing that may trap heat to your body

HOW DO WE EVALUATE HEAT STRESS IN THE WORKPLACE?

The risk of heat stress is not based on temperature alone. When assessing the risk of heat stress, you must also consider the following factors:

- Humidity (moisture in the air)
- Radiant Heat (sun, furnaces, steam, etc.)
- Physical Activity
- Cooling (the evaporation of sweat)
- Acclimatization (your body slowly getting used to hotter temperatures)

PROTECT YOURSELF!

Whether at home or at work, make sure you take the following precautions to protect yourself from heat related illnesses when it's hot and humid inside or outside.

- Drink plenty of water and avoid caffeinated beverages.
- Wear light, breathable, light coloured, loose fitting clothing.
- Take frequent breaks, in cool or shady areas if possible
- Avoid overly strenuous activities.
- If possible, postpone strenuous activities to cooler times of day.
- Cover your skin or use sunscreen when in direct sunlight.
- Use mechanical aids for material handling (i.e. carts, lifting devices), to reduce manual lifting.

