

# SAFETY TALK

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# The C.H.I.L.L. Method for Heat Stress Prevention

As temperatures rise, heat stress becomes a serious workplace hazard, especially for employees working outdoors, in warm indoor environments, or performing physically demanding tasks. Heat illness can develop quickly and may become life-threatening if not addressed. Use the C.H.I.L.L. Method to help prevent heat stress:

## C – CLIMATE CHECK

Heat stress is affected by more than temperature. Humidity, sun exposure, airflow, radiant heat, and workload all impact how quickly the body overheats. To stay ahead of the heat:

- Check weather, humidex, and heat warnings before work.
- Monitor changing conditions throughout the day.
- Adjust work plans when heat increases.
- Schedule strenuous tasks during cooler hours where possible.
- Increase breaks and ensure shaded/cooled recovery areas are available.
- Review emergency response procedures for heat illness.



## H – HYDRATE

Sweating helps cool the body but also causes fluid loss.

**Remember: If you are thirsty, you may already be dehydrated. To stay hydrated:**

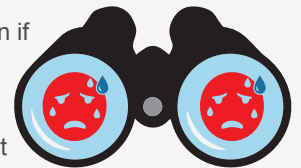
- Begin hydrating before work starts, especially on hot days.
- Drink water regularly throughout the shift, even if you are not thirsty.
- Caffeine can increase dehydration, limit your caffeine intake.
- Keep water close to the work area whenever possible.
- Bring refillable water bottles or hydration packs.
- Use every break as an opportunity to drink water.
- Continue rehydrating after the shift.



## I – INTERACT AND MONITOR

Workers may not recognize their own heat stress symptoms. Watch for signs such as heavy sweating, thirst, cramps, fatigue, dizziness, headache, nausea, confusion, hot dry skin, or fainting.

- Check in with coworkers regularly.
- Use the buddy system. Have workers actively monitor one another for signs of heat stress or distress. Pay attention to changes in behaviour, pace, coordination, or attitude, including workers becoming unusually quiet, withdrawn, or irritable.
- Immediately report symptoms or concerns, even if they seem minor.
- Ensure you know what to do if someone shows signs of heat illness.
- Speak up about heat-related symptoms, it's part of working safely.



## L – LIGHT CLOTHING AND SHADE

Proper clothing and access to cooler areas can help the body regulate temperature more effectively. To stay cooler:

- Wear light-coloured clothing to reflect heat rather than absorb it.
- Choose breathable, loose-fitting fabrics.
- Use hats, neck coverings, or cooling towels for outdoor work.
- Be aware that certain PPE or layered clothing can increase heat retention.
- Take breaks in shaded, ventilated, or air-conditioned areas.
- Use fans or cooling stations where available.
- Rotate tasks between sun and shade when possible.



## L – LIMIT HEAVY WORK

The harder the body works, the more heat it generates. Heavy lifting, repetitive motion, and physically demanding tasks can cause body temperature to rise quickly, especially when combined with hot, humid conditions. To reduce strain:

- Schedule strenuous or high-exertion tasks during cooler parts of the day.
- Rotate physically demanding work among workers.
- Increase the frequency and length of rest breaks.
- Slow work pace when necessary.
- Break large tasks into smaller stages to allow for recovery periods.
- Use mechanical aids or equipment where possible to reduce physical effort.
- Reassess workloads when heat, humidity, or direct sun increase throughout the day.
- Remember that workers new to hot environments, returning from time away, or not yet acclimatized may fatigue more quickly and require more rest periods.

