



San Diego Services

# Hot Weather Safety

JULY WEEK 1

Summer is here again; you will be exposed to hot and humid conditions. Hot weather and high humidity can spell disaster. When humidity is high and the body is unable to cool itself sufficiently through sweating, serious heat stress may occur. Because your job is physically demanding, exposure to these conditions elevates your risk for heat stress. This illness can affect your alertness and physical strength, and can cause fatigue and reduced mental capacity. More serious cases can lead to heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke.

To protect yourself from heat illness, remember the following:

- Perform the heaviest work during the coolest part of the day—usually the early morning.
- Take time to slowly adjust your body to the heat to build up a tolerance for it.
- Keep your body hydrated. Drink plenty of fluids such as cool water and sports drinks with electrolytes.
- Avoid drinking coffee, tea, and carbonated drinks. They actually increase dehydration.
- Wear light-colored, loose-fitting, cotton clothing.
- Take frequent breaks in cool shaded areas.
- Avoid eating large amounts of food or heavy meals before working in hot environments.

- Signs of *heat cramps* include spasms and cramps in your muscles due to excessive loss of salts through sweating. If this occurs, you should stop, take a break, and replace your body's electrolytes with a drink like Gatorade®.
- Symptoms of *heat exhaustion* include headaches, dizziness, light-headedness, weakness, dry mouth, nausea, rapid breathing, and pale clammy skin. If you experience these symptoms, immediately move to a cool, shaded area to rest. Loosen or remove clothing, and drink some water. If you don't feel better in a few minutes, call 911.
- When *heat stroke* occurs, your body is no longer capable of cooling itself. This is a serious medical emergency. Symptoms include pale or red skin, lack of sweating, confusion, irritability, seizures, and loss of consciousness. Call for emergency medical help immediately. Move the victim to a cool shaded area. Remove any heavy outer clothing and try to keep the person cool.

Never ignore the symptoms of heat-related illness. Tell someone immediately, stop what you're doing, and cool off.

### SAFETY REMINDER

**Even getting a good tan may increase your risk of skin cancer.**

**Protect your skin from the sun with clothing or sun block.**

### NOTES:

SPECIAL TOPICS /EMPLOYEE SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS/NOTES:

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*These instructions do not supersede local, state, or federal regulations.*



San Diego Services

# Be Cool this Summer

JULY WEEK 2

Gone are the cold days of winter along with the snow and ice. Now that the hot weather is upon us, we need to adapt our lifestyles and work habits accordingly. You should take the necessary precautions to protect yourself from the harmful effects of heat and sunlight. Working at a construction site might expose you to the severe summer sun, but caution and planning can help you prevent sunburn, cancer, and heat-related illnesses.

Sunburn occurs when unprotected skin is exposed to the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays for too long. Keep in mind that repeated sunburns can lead to skin cancer. The number of skin cancer cases in the United States is rising at an alarming rate. Melanoma is the most serious form of skin cancer and it accounts for more than 75% of the deaths due to skin cancer. Sunlight is the main source of the UV radiation that causes melanoma. You can protect yourself by covering up. Wear clothing that does not transmit UV light. Use a sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher. Try to limit your exposure to the sun during the hottest part of the day.

Hot weather also increases your chances of developing a heat-related medical condition. Heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke are common during the hot summer months. You should be aware of the symptoms:

**Heat cramps:** symptoms include painful muscle spasms usually following strenuous work.

**Heat exhaustion:** symptoms include headaches, weakness, nausea, vomiting, fainting, and pale, clammy skin.

**Heat stroke:** symptoms include dry, pale skin; no sweating; hot, red skin; seizures; and loss of consciousness.

**These are some of the things you can do to reduce the possibility of heat-related illnesses:**

- Avoid wearing heavy clothing that will hold in body heat and make it difficult for perspiration to evaporate.
- Wear enough clothing to protect your skin from direct sunlight and prevent sunburn.
- Drink plenty of fluids, but avoid or limit caffeinated beverages.
- Perform the heaviest work during the coolest part of the day and take frequent breaks in cool, shaded areas.
- Work in pairs and keep an eye on your partner. Watch for symptoms of heat-related illnesses.
- Avoid eating large meals before working in hot environments.

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**SAFETY REMINDER**  
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**High Temperature + High Humidity + Physical Work = Heat Illness**

**NOTES:**

SPECIAL TOPICS /EMPLOYEE SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS/NOTES:

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San Diego Services

# Skin Cancer

JULY WEEK 3

Many construction tasks involve spending a lot of time out in the sun. Often, you may be exposed to sunlight for 10 to 12 hours a day. Exposure to ultraviolet (UV) light from the sun is the most common cause of skin cancer. The good news is that sun exposure is also easily preventable. In previous Safety Meetings, we have addressed other health problems associated with working in the sun. Today we'll address skin cancer and what you can do to reduce your risk of developing it.

Skin cancer is the most common type of cancer in the United States. It's defined as an uncontrolled growth of abnormal cells in the skin. Melanoma is cancer that forms in cells that make pigment. It is the least common but also the most dangerous type of skin cancer. Melanomas appear most often on the upper back, head, and neck. Skin cancer can also develop on the surface of the skin (squamous cells) or on the layers just beneath the outer layer (basal cells).

Basal cell skin cancer grows slowly and usually occurs on areas of the skin that have been exposed to the sun. It is most common on the face. This type of cancer rarely spreads to other parts of the body. Squamous cell skin cancer also occurs on parts of the body that have been in the sun, but it can also occur in areas that are not exposed to the sun. It sometimes spreads to lymph nodes and organs inside the body.

Skin cancer can almost always be cured if it's detected and treated early. Check your skin regularly for any unusual

changes. Pay attention to any spot on your skin that changes size, shape, or color. Danger signs of skin cancer include any sore or skin patch that doesn't heal properly or that looks crater-like with crusty or pearly skin. If anything seems unusual, visit your doctor as soon as possible.

Learn to protect yourself from skin-damaging exposure to the sun. Wear clothes that cover as much of your skin as possible to provide a physical barrier from UV rays. Wear a full-brim hard hat to protect your face and neck from the sun. Wear sunscreen daily. Be sure to use sunscreen with a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of 30 or higher and a lip balm with an SPF of 15 or higher. Don't forget to put sunscreen on your ears, neck, forearms, and both hands. Ideally, you should reapply sunscreen every two hours. Try to take your breaks and eat lunch in a shaded area.

For more skin cancer information, visit the American Cancer Society at [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org).

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**SAFETY REMINDER**  
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**During weekends, holidays, and vacations, protect yourself and your family from the damaging effects of the sun.**

**It's never too soon to teach young children about sun protection.**

**NOTES:**

SPECIAL TOPICS /EMPLOYEE SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS/NOTES:

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San Diego Services

# Stay Cool When It's Hot

JULY WEEK 4

It sure has gotten hot out here! With the onset of hot weather, we must make sure that exposure to heat doesn't compromise our health and safety. Anyone can become vulnerable to the stresses of severe summer heat, but because so much construction work takes place outside, we're more vulnerable than most. We need to keep a cool head about hot weather safety.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report that from 1979 to 1999, excessive heat exposure caused 8,015 deaths in the United States. That means that during this 20-year period, more people died from extreme heat than from hurricanes, lightning, tornadoes, floods, and earthquakes combined. Weather conditions are out of our control, but we can take precautions to prevent heat-related illnesses and deaths during these hot summer months. All we need to do is learn to protect ourselves and learn to recognize the signs of heat illness.

Reduce your risk of suffering heat-related illnesses by protecting your body on the inside and the outside:

- **Wear** lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing.
- **Prevent** sunburn by applying sunscreen with a high sun protection factor (SPF).
- **Eat** regular, well-balanced meals and avoid heavy foods in the heat of the day.

- **Drink** plenty of fluids to keep your body hydrated; water and electrolyte replacement drinks are best.
- **Avoid** caffeinated drinks and alcohol.

The most severe heat-induced illnesses are heat exhaustion and heat stroke. If you or your co-workers don't take action to treat heat exhaustion, the illness could progress to heat stroke and possibly death. Symptoms of heat exhaustion include headaches, dizziness, weakness, nausea, vomiting, and pale, clammy skin. If your co-worker shows these symptoms, move the victim to a cool, shaded area. Loosen and remove clothing. Try to cool the person by fanning, spraying the skin with a mist of water, or wiping the skin with a wet cloth. If the person doesn't feel better, call 9-1-1. Symptoms of heat stroke include hot, dry skin, changes in skin color, strange behavior, seizures or fits, and loss of consciousness. Call 9-1-1 immediately if a co-worker has any of these symptoms. While help is on the way, move the person to a cool, shaded area, then cool the victim's body by placing ice packs under the armpits and in the groin.

### SAFETY REMINDER

**Try to do the heaviest work during the coolest part of the day, and remember to take frequent breaks.**

#### NOTES:

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