

Outdoor Heat Stress

OVERVIEW

Employees working in outdoor environments may be exposed to conditions that can cause heat-related illnesses, such as heat rash, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke. Departments are responsible for protecting employees from outdoor heat-related illnesses by:

- Identifying, evaluating, and controlling exposure to extreme temperature, humidity, and other environmental factors.
- Providing access to sufficient drinking water.
- Training supervisors and employees in matters related to the cause, detection, and prevention of, and response to, heat-related illnesses.
- Establishing heat-related emergency procedures.

DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBILITY

As part of an overall departmental accident prevention program, departments are responsible for developing written outdoor heat stress programs when employees wearing the following types of clothing are expected to work in temperatures exceeding the following action levels:

Outdoor Temperature and Clothing Action Levels	
Non-breathing clothes, including vapor barrier clothing or personal protective equipment (PPE) such as chemical resistant suits	Above 52° F
Double-layer woven clothes, including coveralls, jackets, and sweatshirts	Above 77° F
All other clothing	Above 89° F

Outdoor work includes any employee or student assignment to work in the outdoor environment on a regular basis.

This policy does not apply to incidental exposure, which exists when an employee or student is required to perform a work activity outdoors for *not longer* than fifteen minutes in any sixty-minute period.

NOTE: Outdoor heat-related illness may result at temperatures below the action levels when employees have not acclimatized to sudden and significant increases in temperature and humidity. Supervisors and employees should monitor for signs and symptoms of outdoor heat-related illness when there is a significant and sudden increase in temperature.

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Environmental Health and Safety

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OUTDOOR HEAT STRESS WRITTEN PROGRAM

An outdoor heat stress written program consists of procedures for:

- Identifying, evaluating, and controlling exposure to extreme temperature, humidity, and other environmental factors.
- Providing access to sufficient drinking water (at least one quart of water per employee per hour).
- Responding to a heat-related illnesses.
- Training supervisors and employees (including annual refresher training) in matters related to the cause, detection, and prevention of, and response to, heat-related illnesses

Written Program Template

Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) has created an outdoor heat stress written program template, which departments may use to develop and implement written departmental programs. To obtain the template contact EH&S; telephone 509-335-3041; or see the Workplace Safety area of the EH&S website at:

ehs.wsu.edu/

TRAINING

Environmental Health and Safety has developed an outdoor heat stress training program for supervisors and employees. To obtain the training program materials, contact EH&S; telephone 509-335-3041; or access the EH&S website (see link above).

ASSISTANCE

Contact EH&S for assistance with:

- Evaluating outdoor heat stress conditions.
- Developing an outdoor heat stress written program.
- Obtaining employee and supervisor training materials.