

SAFETY SPOTLIGHT

OUTDOOR HEAT SAFETY



As we prepare for summer, more time is spent outdoors, both at work and during our personal time. While this is beneficial in many ways, it also poses hazards in the form of heat illness, when your body can't adequately cool itself through sweating. This is most likely to happen during hot, humid weather and when performing hard physical work. There are several levels of heat illness severity:

Heat Cramps/Rash: Muscle cramps or skin irritation caused by heavy sweating and low salt levels. Usually resolves with rest, fluids, and snacks. Seek medical care if cramps last more than an hour.

Heat Syncope: Muscle cramps or skin irritation caused by heavy sweating and low salt levels. Usually resolves with rest, fluids, and snacks. Seek medical care if cramps last more than an hour.

Heat Exhaustion: Caused by excessive loss of water and salt through sweating. Symptoms may include weakness, nausea, and headache. Requires prompt medical care.

Heat Stroke: A life-threatening condition where the body can no longer regulate its temperature. Signs include confusion, loss of consciousness, and hot, dry skin. **Call 911 immediately**—this is a medical emergency.

Follow these tips to stay safe while spending time outdoors in the heat:

- ❖ Whenever possible, give yourself time to acclimatize (20% exposure on the first day and up to 20% more each day after). This will put less stress on your body as it adapts to the heat over time.
- ❖ Ensure a plentiful free supply of cool water and encourage drinking throughout the day.
- ❖ Drink sports drinks to replenish salt levels.
- ❖ Avoid caffeine and alcohol, which can cause dehydration.
- ❖ When temperatures reach 80 degrees ensure access to frequent rest breaks in the shade or in an air-conditioned building. Take more frequent rest breaks if the temperature spikes or during a heat wave.
- ❖ Wear loose fitting, breathable, light-colored, and lightweight clothing. Long sleeves help prevent sunburn and wide-brimmed hats provide shade.
- ❖ Notify your supervisor immediately if you notice symptoms of heat illness in yourself or someone else.
- ❖ Avoid working alone when possible; if you must work alone, do frequent check-ins with a supervisor.

Please contact your ASCIP Risk Services Consultant or our Risk Services team at RM_Info@ascip.org for questions or to discuss further.