**Heat Stress Safety Policy Example - Small Workplace**

There is a fact sheet on Sun Safety Policies that accompanies the policy examples. Please read the fact sheet first. The contents of this document are examples only and require adaptation to individual workplace needs.

1. **Background**

Heat stress is known to cause mild to severe illness and even death. As such, exposure to heat from the sun is a serious health and safety issue for Small Example Organization and its Employees.

It is the Policy of Small Example Organization that all employees who are exposed to heat from the sun in the course of their duties be protected from heat stress. This objective shall be achieved by following the practices and procedures in this Policy and as directed by the Managers and Supervisors of Small Example Corporation.

1. **Policy**

Small Example Corporation shall protect employees and meet legal obligations by establishing procedures and practices to reduce employees’ exposure to heat from the sun.

All employees shall follow their roles and responsibilities as described in this Policy to carry out practices and procedures to prevent overexposure to heat from the sun.

1. **Scope**

This Policy applies to all Small Example Corporation management, employees, constructors and subcontractors.

1. **Roles and Responsibilities**

Management shall:

Maintain practices and procedures to prevent overexposure heat stress. Employee input is key this this process and is encouraged. These practices and procedures shall be reviewed once per year or as necessary, including assessing heat stress risks and implementation of control measures to reduce these risks. Each year in spring the company will provide training in heat stress safety. The Health and Safety Committee and OHS Lead shall investigate any incidents and recommend methods to eliminate the excessive heat exposure in a timely fashion.

Supervisors shall:

Monitor worksites for heat/humidex levels daily during heat alert/high humidex periods and implement response actions in accordance with *Daily Heat Stress Response Procedure*. This includes posting *Heat Stress Alerts* and *Heat Stress Warnings* when appropriate.

Utilize Heat Stress Risk Assessments for jobsites, such as the *Heat Stress Risk Assessment for Outdoor Workers – Daily Monitoring Plan*, and completing appropriate records (such as *Heat Stress Risk Assessment for Outdoor Workers – Daily Assessment Records*).

Ensure new employees are aware of the Heat Stress Safety Policy and practice heat safety.

Remind staff as opportunity presents to stay hydrated and seek shade during job tasks and breaks.

Make cool water supply easily accessible.

Ensure that all employees are wearing/using appropriate personal protection

Allow employees to acclimatize to hot working environments; staff should start out gradually and build up to optimum work level over a period of days. Implement acclimatization regimen in accordance with the approved safe work procedures.

Schedule more physically demanding tasks, before 11am or after 3pm, in the cooler times of the day on high humidex days when possible.

Rotate people through hot, heavy demand jobs, if possible.

Post and share daily Humidex with outdoor workers.

Ask how workers are feeling. Supervisors should monitor workplace temperature and humidity and check workers' condition. Allow workers to stop their work if they become extremely uncomfortable.

Implement work/rest cycle regimen in accordance with the approved safe work procedures.

Allow employees to self-pace their workloads during high heat stress periods and in accordance with the approved safe work procedures.

Reduce work for anyone at risk. Supervisors should use common sense in determining fitness for work in hot environments. Some factors to consider: age, poor conditioning, pregnancy, previous heat injuries, certain medical conditions, lack of acclimatization.

Be vigilant for signs and symptoms of heat stress.

Ensure that first aid is provided when necessary and will arrange emergency medical aid when appropriate.

Include heat safety into toolbox/safety talks on a monthly basis between April and October.

Report and investigate all incidents of overexposure to heat and take corrective action.

Employees shall:

Be familiar with the heat stress policy and procedures in the workplace. Policies and procedures usually include guidelines on acclimatization and work/rest cycles.

Acclimatize. It takes time to adjust to working in heat. Work with your supervisor to gradually increase your work load and heat exposure in accordance with the acclimatization regimen in the approved safe work procedures.

Take more rest breaks when doing heavier work, and in high heat and humidity. Take breaks in the shade or in air conditioned buildings or vehicles.

Follow the work/rest cycle regimen as directed by your supervisor.

If possible, schedule work to minimize heat exposure. Do the hardest physical work during the coolest part of the day.

Encourage your co-workers to practice heat safe behaviours.

Drink water frequently. Drink enough water that you never become thirsty. During moderate activity in moderately hot conditions, workers should drink about 1 cup of water every 15-20 minutes.

Eat healthy. You can and should replace essential elements lost during sweating. Eat a balanced diet rather than taking salt tablets or drinking expensive sports drinks.

Wear/use personal protection as required by their employer. This includes a wide-brimmed hat or hard hat with brim attachment and neck flap, and light-coloured, loose-fitting clothing made of breathable fabric. Avoid non-breathable synthetic clothing.

Be aware that some protective clothing or personal protective equipment may increase the risk of heat stress.

If necessary, consider also wearing specialized heat-protective clothing to help keep your body temperature down. Heat-protective clothing that may be useful for outdoor workers includes temperature-controlled clothing such as air-cooled suits, water-cooled suits, and ice-cooled waistcoats.

Wash clothes regularly and maintain good person hygiene.

Know signs and symptoms of heat illnesses. Watch out for heat-stress symptoms in yourself and your coworkers. Report heat symptoms early.

Use the buddy system to monitor one another as you may not see or feel the effects.

Know what to do in an emergency. The plan should include procedures for providing affected workers with first aid and arranging for medical aid.

Remember that your physical condition can reduce your ability to deal with the heat. Age, weight, fitness, health conditions (heart disease or high blood pressure), recent illness, or medications can all affect your ability to withstand high temperatures.

If you are on medication, read the label or talk to your doctor to understand how it might cause your body to react to the sun and heat.

Avoid eating large meals before working in hot environments.

Should an incident occur:

Employees shall immediately report instances of heat stress to their Supervisor.

The Supervisor shall immediately take steps for first aid as necessary.

The Supervisor shall take steps to reduce or eliminate the heat stress conditions/exposures without delay.

The Supervisor shall report the incident to Senior Management.

The Supervisor shall complete an accident reporting form.

1. **Definitions**

Heat Stress – the physiological response of the human body to excessive heat exposure and is characterized by the body’s inability to self-regulate body temperature. It can lead to a range of heat-induced health conditions, the most serious being heat stroke.

PPE – Personal protective equipment

1. **Resources**
2. PPE List
3. Work Procedures Manual – Daily Heat Stress Response Procedure
4. Resource – SSAWC *Heat Stress Risk Assessment for Outdoor Workers – Daily Monitoring Plan*
5. Resource – SSAWC *Heat Stress Risk Assessment for Outdoor Workers – Daily Assessment Records*
6. Resource – *SSAWC Training Presentation for Employees*
7. Resource – *SSAWC Training Presentation for Supervisors*
8. Resource – *SSAWC Safety Talk*
9. Resource – *SSAWC Posters*
10. Resource – *SSAWC Fact Sheets*
11. Resource – *SSAWC Example Roles and Responsibilities*

Visit sunsafetyatwork.ca for more information. This resource was prepared by Keith McMillan and Dr. Thomas Tenkate. Production of this resource has been made possible through financial support from Health Canada through the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer.