

# Heat Stress & Outdoor Work



**SUN EXPOSURE**  
IS THE PRIMARY SOURCE OF  
**HEAT STRESS**  
FOR OUTDOOR WORKERS<sup>1</sup>



**HEAT STRESS CONTRIBUTES**  
**TO HEALTH ISSUES FROM**  
**HEAT RASH TO HEAT STROKE**

Heat stroke is the most serious. It can damage the heart, kidneys, and liver, and can result in death.<sup>2</sup>

## PRIMARY FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO HEAT STRESS<sup>3</sup>



### ENVIRONMENT

Air temperature, humidity, the sun



### WORKER

Hydration, clothing, medical conditions, acclimatization (how your body copes with a hot environment)



### WORK

The amount of work done and how much effort it takes to complete the work

## KNOW YOUR RISK

Everyone responds differently to heat. Know your personal risk factors that could increase your chance of **heat stress**:<sup>3</sup>



**Lack of acclimatization** (how your body copes with a hot environment)



**Poor physical fitness or an unhealthy weight**



**Age**



**Flu, lack of sleep, and other minor illnesses**



**Reoccurring skin disorders** (rashes, dermatitis, etc.)



**Caffeine, drugs, and alcohol can cause dehydration**



**Previous heat stroke**



**Pre-existing medical conditions - diabetes, heart disease, among others**



**Use of some medications**

## USE THESE SIX SIMPLE STEPS TO PROTECT YOURSELF

**1**

Know the signs and symptoms of heat stress

**2**

Watch out for symptoms in yourself and others

**3**

Wear sunscreen, a hat, and lightweight, loose-fitting clothing

**4**

Drink water often - avoid drinks with alcohol and caffeine

**5**

Take breaks in the shade and more often on hot days

**6**

Know how your workplace deals with heat stress

<sup>1</sup>Ontario Ministry of Labour, 2012.

<sup>2</sup>Chao T C, et al., 1981.

<sup>3</sup>WorkSafeBC, Preventing Heat Stress at Work, 2007.

Visit [sunsafetyatwork.ca](http://sunsafetyatwork.ca) for more information.

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