



Surviving the Texas Heat

Heat-related illnesses are common occurrences in our brutally hot, humid Texas summers and come in various forms, including minor inconveniences, such as a sunburn or rash, but can progress into something much more significant, such as a heat stroke. Severe heat illnesses occur when the body cannot get rid of excess heat, causing core temperatures to rise and the heart rate to increase. Heat and dehydration can also affect concentration and employees can be more prone to accidents. With proper education and preparation, heat-related illnesses and deaths are preventable.

Heat Illnesses in Order of Increased Severity

Sunburn • Heat Rash • Cramps • Heat Exhaustion • Stress • Heat Stroke

Signs and Symptoms of Heat Illness:

- Dizziness or headache
- Fatigue, weakness
- Cramping
- Damp, pale, or clammy skin
- Sweating stops, redness of skin
- Confusion
- Vomiting

Personal Risk Factors for Heat Illness:

- *Lifestyle* - caffeine drinkers, alcohol consumption, and fitness level.
- *Body Size* - carrying excess weight affects the body's regulation of temperature.
- *Age* - young people and older adults do not adjust as well to temperature changes.
- *Illnesses* - heart disease, diabetes, and prior heat-related illness.

Preventing Heat Illness:

- Cool water is best for optimal hydration. It is important not to overconsume sports drinks.
- Be sure to get adequate sleep and nutrition.
- Take breaks to allow time to acclimate to the weather and watch out for each other.
- Wear light-colored, loose-fitting, and ventilated clothing.
- Educate employees to know the signs of heat exhaustion.
- Plan work for cooler times of the day and monitor conditions using a heat stress app.
- Use SPF sunscreen that blocks UVA and UVB sun rays.

Links to Resources

- <https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/warning.html>
- <https://www.dhs.gov/publication/heat-stress-resources>
- <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/emergencypreparedness/guides/heat.html>
- <https://www.weather.gov/safety/heat-illness>

TMLIRP Resources

- Heat Stress for Public Employees: Seeing Red (DVD Disk #181)
- Heat Stress: Don't Lose Your Cool (DVD Disk #94)
- [Online Learning Center](#): Dealing with Heat Stress

