

# Using the Heat Index: A Guide for Employers

## Training Workers

Train workers *before* hot outdoor work begins. Tailor the training topic outline to cover employer-specific policies and worksite-specific conditions. A single worksite may have some job tasks that are low risk for heat-related illness and others that are high risk. Training will be more effective if it is matched to job tasks and conditions, and is reviewed and reinforced throughout hot weather conditions. The following training topics may be addressed in one session or in a series of shorter sessions.

### *Training Topics:*

- Risk factors for heat-related illness.
- Different types of heat-related illness, including how to recognize common signs and symptoms.
- Heat-related illness prevention procedures.
- Importance of drinking small quantities of water often.
- Importance of acclimatization, how it is developed, and how your worksite procedures address it.
- Importance of immediately reporting signs or symptoms of heat-related illness to the supervisor.
- Procedures for responding to possible heat-related illness.
- Procedures to follow when contacting emergency medical services.
- Procedures to ensure that clear and precise directions to the work site will be provided to emergency medical services.

<b>Factors that May Cause Heat-related Illness</b>	
Environmental	High temperature and humidity Direct sun exposure (with no shade) or extreme heat Limited air movement (no breeze or wind)
Job-Specific	Physical exertion Use of bulky protective clothing and equipment
Personal	Dehydration Poor physical condition or ongoing health problems Kidney disease Some medications Pregnancy Lack of previous exposure to hot workplaces

	Previous heat-related illness Obesity Alcoholism
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See Training Resources for heat-related illness prevention training tools and resources. Also see OSHA's Heat-Related Illness Prevention Training Guide for one tool to help you train your workers. The training guide includes instructions for teaching workers about heat hazards and a daily checklist to make sure all appropriate precautions are in place each workday. OSHA's factsheets and worksite posters (in English and Spanish) can help in communicating key messages about heat safety and health. Some labor and industry organizations offer industry-specific guidance for protecting workers, such as wildland firefighters, that face heat exposure under special circumstances. Inquire whether your industry offers any special guidance, or adapt information from industries with similar situations.