

## HEAT STRESS

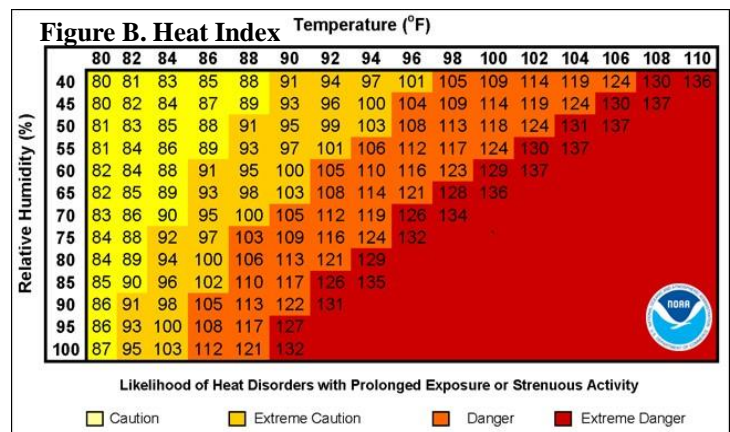
Heat stress, from exertion or hot environments, places workers at risk for illness such as heat stroke, heat exhaustion, or heat cramps.

### Preventing/Minimizing the Effects of Heat Stress

- Wear loose fitting, light colored porous clothing which allows free air circulation over the body. Wear a well-ventilated broad brimmed hat.
- Open windows and doors to reduce humidity and to provide air circulation and room ventilation. Use fans to move air quickly.
- Schedule work when and where it is cooler. This can include the early morning and evening hours or utilizing shaded areas, when available.
- Work moderately over long periods, rather than intensely for short periods.
- Drink cool, electrolyte replacement fluids in moderate amounts frequently before, during, and after the heat stress. Do not depend on salt tablets to replace body electrolytes. Avoid alcoholic beverages or those with high sugar content.
- Monitor yourself and your coworkers for symptoms often (**Figure A**). Immediately discontinue work and get out of the heat if symptoms are observed. Do not drive or operate machinery if you have any of the signs and symptoms of heat stress.
- Account for temperature and relative humidity to determine the [Heat Index](#). The Heat Index is a measure of how hot it feels when relative humidity is factored in with the actual air temperature. To find the Heat Index temperature, reference the Heat Index Chart (**Figure B**). For example, if the air temperature is 96°F and the relative humidity is 65%, the heat index--how hot it feels--is 121°F. The red area without numbers indicates extreme danger.
- Consider rescheduling work when the Heat Index is high. If work must be performed, aggressive protective measures must be put in place such as limiting exposure times, using a buddy system, and emergency planning.

**Figure A. Heat-Related Illnesses, Symptoms and Signs**

Illness	Symptoms and Signs	
Heat Stroke	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>^ Confusion</li> <li>^ Slurred speech</li> <li>^ Unconsciousness</li> <li>^ Seizures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>^ Heavy sweating or hot, dry skin</li> <li>^ Very high body temperature</li> <li>^ Rapid heart rate</li> </ul>
Heat Exhaustion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>^ Fatigue</li> <li>^ Irritability</li> <li>^ Thirst</li> <li>^ Nausea or vomiting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>^ Dizziness or lightheadedness</li> <li>^ Heavy sweating</li> <li>^ Elevated body temperature of fast heart rate</li> </ul>
Heat Cramps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>^ Muscle spasms or pain</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>^ Usually in legs, arms, or trunk</li> </ul>
Heat Syncope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>^ Fainting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>^ Dizziness</li> </ul>
Heat Rash	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>^ Clusters of red bumps on skin</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>^ Often appears on neck, upper chest, and skin folds</li> </ul>
Rhabdomyolysis (muscle breakdown)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>^ Muscle pain</li> <li>^ Weakness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>^ Dark urine or reduced urine output</li> </ul>



### After Heat Exposure

- Remove or loosen clothing.
- Rest in a cool, well-ventilated area, or shower with tepid or cool (not cold) water.
- Seek medical help if you feel dizzy, faint or nauseated after you have cooled down.