



PREVENTING HEATSTROKE AND DEHYDRATION WHEN WORKING IN HOT WEATHER

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- UV rays from the sun are a major cause of skin cancer - in the UK over 100,000 people are diagnosed with skin cancer each year. In the short term, staff may get sunburnt which can be extremely painful and prevent safe working.
- Driving in hot weather can be draining; it is easy to lose concentration, especially if you are driving for long periods.
- Labour intensive work in hot weather will increase perspiration levels, leaving staff vulnerable to dehydration and possibly heatstroke. Heat exhaustion left untreated, may develop into heatstroke which can lead to unconsciousness if untreated.

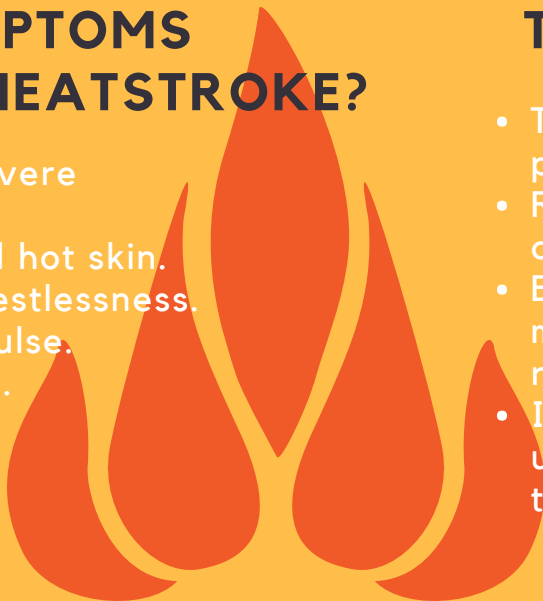


WHAT SYMPTOMS INDICATE HEAT EXHAUSTION?

- **Pale, sweaty skin.**
- **Feeling sick and having a loss of appetite.**
- **Complaining of feeling cold, but being hot to the touch.**
- **Stomach, arm or leg cramps.**
- **If heat exhaustion is not spotted and treated quickly, heatstroke can develop.**

WHAT SYMPTOMS INDICATE HEATSTROKE?

- Dizziness and severe headaches.
- Flushed, dry and hot skin.
- Confusion and restlessness.
- Strong, heavy pulse.
- Unconsciousness.



TREATMENT

- Take them to a cool/shady place.
- Remove any extra layers of clothing and lay them down.
- Encourage them to drink as much fluid as possible to rehydrate them.
- If the employee becomes unconscious, dial 999 and place them in the 'recovery position'.

PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN A CURE

- It is an employer's responsibility to ensure that staff are suitably protected from the harmful effects of the sun, but what steps can you take to fulfil this responsibility?
- Look to adjust working hours to avoid periods of intense sun (working early in the morning or later in the evening).
- Consider whether working outside is necessary and whether this activity can be conducted indoors/under cover.
- Encourage staff to seek shade when possible and ensure provision is made for staff to take breaks in the shade.
- If it is exceptionally hot, consider job rotation with staff that are working in other shaded areas.
- Consider the suitability of working clothes. Providing staff would not be exposed to additional hazards, such as cuts/bruises, allowing summer clothing along with the use of sun cream could well be a sensible concession in hot weather.
- Consider drivers and that they are taking suitable fluids out on the road with them.
- Yard staff should wear hats and use sun cream with a minimum of SPF 30 (applied 20 minutes before going outside) – consideration should be given to providing both to all staff.
- Ensure access to drinks - this might include provision of water bottles near workstations or work areas.
- Promote a good safety culture, helping to combat the 'it won't happen to me' mindset.