



Heat Stress

What is Heat Stress?

Human beings need to maintain a constant body temperature if they are to stay healthy. Working in high temperatures will induce heat stress when more heat is absorbed into the body than can be dissipated out.

Heat illness from heat exhaustion or heat cramps are visible signs that people are working in unbearable heat. In the most severe cases, the body's temperature control system breaks down altogether and body temperature rises rapidly. This is heat stroke, which can be fatal.

There are three main stages of heat accumulation effects

<u>STAGE</u>	<u>SIGNS & SYMPTOMS</u>
<u>Stage 1 - Heat Cramps</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Muscle cramps• Nauseous• Dizzy• Tired & weak• Skin moist & cool
<u>Stage 2 – Heat Exhaustion</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pale clammy skin• Headache• Slurred Speech• Confusion• Light Headedness & Fainting• Nausea & vomiting• Tired & weak• Severe muscle cramps• Thirst• Loss of concentration• Rapid breathing & pulse
<u>Stage 3 - Heat Stroke</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hot dry skin• Chills• Staggering walk• Shivering• Headache• Irritable• Deliriousness• Erratic behaviour• Mental Confusion• Convulsions• Unconsciousness• Death

What helps to prevent heat stress?

Have regular rest breaks - A ten minute break every hour, in a cooler area, helps the body to cool off, especially where the work is hard, physical work. The length of the break should be increased if the temperature is very high.

Drink Plenty of Water - Frequent small drinks of cooled water will help replace the water lost to your body through sweat, before dehydration begins. This is better than infrequent large drinks. Drink Avoid coffee, tea and alcohol because they speed up water loss in the body.

Heat Stress?

Stay Cool like
the Fonz



Acclimatise to the Heat – People who have been in another cooler climate and are travelling to the Pilbara are at an increased risk of heat stress. This includes people who normally work in air conditioned offices who then work outside; people who are visiting the Pilbara for a couple of days from Perth or elsewhere (cooler). When beginning work in the heat, it is best not to push yourself too hard, too early. When starting work or returning from a break, ensure you do the following:

- Take regular breaks in a cool environment
- Drink plenty of water (especially in remote areas)
- Make sure to eat properly and get a good night's sleep

Wear Protective Clothing – If working in direct sunlight, wear a wide brimmed hat, long-sleeved, light-weight shirts that still allow heat to dissipate.

What action should be taken if someone has symptoms of heat illness?

1. Take the sufferer to a cooler area (for example, an air-conditioned shed or vehicle).
2. Then remove excess clothing (hard hat, boots, shirt).
3. Give water to drink, if conscious.
4. Allow the person to rest if they are suffering from heat exhaustion
5. If the person is suffering from heat stroke they should be cooled with water, cold compresses, and/or rapid fanning. If a person is suffering from heat stroke contact your EMO or dial 000.

REMEMBER: HEAT STRESS IS A MEDICAL EMERGENCY

DON'T TAKE CHANCES!