

Protecting People From Heat Stress

High humidity added to hot weather creates a dangerous combination because they interfere with the body's ability to cool itself. Long exposure to hot, humid weather can result in heat cramps or heat exhaustion, and if heat stress continues, a person may suffer heat stroke, which can be fatal. *[The accompanying heat-index chart shows heat and humidity combinations that can be hazardous. —Ed.]*

What Causes Heat Stress

Factors leading to heat stress include high temperature and humidity, direct sun or heat, limited air movement, physical exertion, poor physical condition, some medicines, and inadequate tolerance for hot workplaces.

Symptoms of Heat Exhaustion

- Headaches, dizziness, lightheadedness, or fainting.
- Weakness and moist skin.
- Mood changes, such as irritability or confusion.
- Upset stomach or vomiting.

Symptoms of Heat Stroke

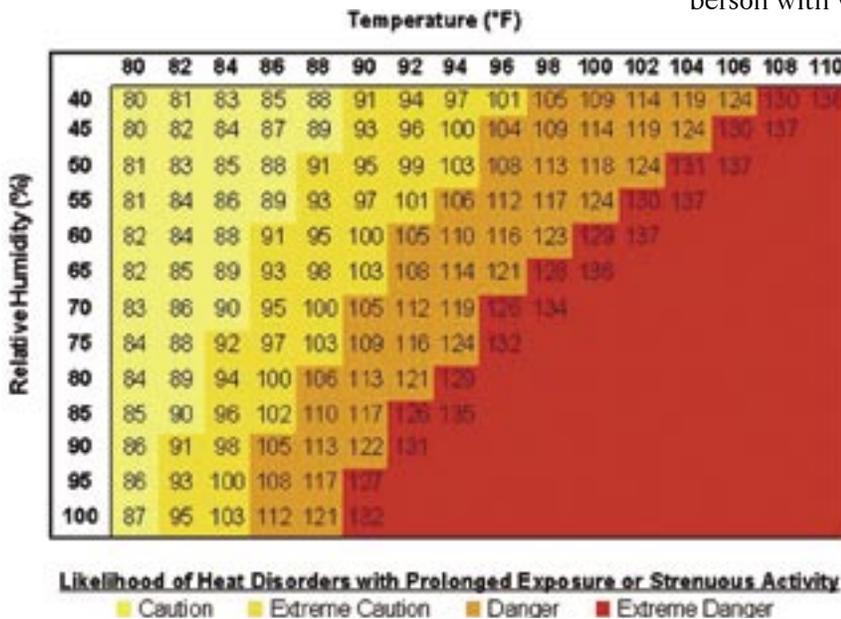
- Dry, hot skin, with no sweating.
- Mental confusion or losing consciousness.
- Seizures or convulsions.

Preventing Heat Stress

- Know signs/symptoms of heat-related illnesses; monitor yourself and coworkers.
- Block out direct sun or other heat sources.
- Use cooling fans/air-conditioning; rest regularly.
- Drink plenty of water—about 5 to 7 ounces every 15 to 20 minutes.
- Wear lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothes.
- Avoid alcohol, caffeinated drinks, or heavy meals.

What To Do for Heat-Related Illness

- Call 911 (or local emergency number) at once.
- While waiting for help to arrive, move the person to a cool, shaded area; loosen or remove heavy clothing; provide cool drinking water, fan and mist the person with water. ■



Resources:

- <http://safetycenter.navy.mil/acquisition/heatstress/default.htm> [*Acquisition Safety: Heat Stress*]
- http://www.osha-slc.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadis.show_document?p_table=FACT_SHEETS&p_id=167 [*Protecting Workers in Hot Environments*]
- <http://www.osha-slc.gov/SLTC/heatstress/recognition.html> [*Heat Stress: Hazards and Possible Solutions*]
- <http://www.4-safety.com/heatstress.htm> [*Heat Stress*].