safe work australia

MANAGING THE RISKS OF

WORKING IN HEAT

Heat is a hazard in many Australian workplaces, whether work is performed indoors or outdoors.

1. IDENTIFY the hazard

To find out if working in heat it is a hazard in your workplace, consider:

- air temperature
- air flow
- humidity
- radiant heat sources
- work requirements, and
- the workplace itself.

To help you identify hazards in your workplace you should talk to workers, including any health and safety representatives, and other duty holders. You can also talk to businesses similar to yours and find out whether heat is a hazard in that workplace, and review near misses, incidents and injury records. This can help you identify risks in your workplace.

2. ASSESS the risk

Once you have identified the working in heat risks, a risk assessment can help you determine:

- how severe the risk is
- whether existing control measures are effective
- what action you should take to control the risk, and
- how urgently you need to take action.

For more information about assessing the risk, visit the Safe Work Australia website.

3. CONTROL the Hazard

You must do everything that is reasonably practicable to eliminate the risks associated with working in heat. This may include cancelling certain work tasks, rescheduling tasks to cooler parts of the day or waiting for hot conditions to pass. If you cannot eliminate the risk, you must minimise it as much as reasonably practicable. Remember, heat that represents a hazard to workers may be generated by more than just weather conditions.

You need to assess and control:

- The work
- The worker
- The working environment

For more information about controlling the risk, visit the Safe Work Australia website.

4. REVIEW the control measures

You must review control measures to ensure that they are working as planned and that they do not introduce new uncontrolled risks.

For example, removing PPE to cool a worker down may introduce new hazards such as exposure to chemicals or solar ultraviolet radiation.

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EXAMPLE

HAZARD:
It is a hot and humid day

RISK:
Work is being undertaken outside at midday, one of your workers is over 60 years old and has returned to work today after being ill

CONTROL:

- Move tasks around so that work can be done inside or in a shaded area midday
- remind workers to re-hydrate
- assign alternative duties to the worker at risk

Read the *Managing the risks of working in heat Guidance material* on our website for more information about keeping you and your workers safe when working in heat.

safe work australia

MANAGING THE RISKS OF

WORKING IN HEAT

1. IDENTIFY the hazard

Heat can be a hazard in lots of different workplaces, and not only when working outside.

To find out if heat is a hazard in your workplace, consider:

- air temperature
- air flow
- humidity
- radiant heat sources
- work requirements

To help you identify hazards in your workplace you should talk to workers, their health and safety representatives (if any) and other duty holders. Review incident and injury records. You can also talk to other businesses similar to yours to find out if heat is a hazard in their workplace.

2. ASSESS the risk

Once you have identified the working in heat risks, a risk assessment can help you determine:

- the severity and likelihood of the risk
- whether existing control measures are effective
- what action you should take to control the risk, and
- how urgently you need to take action.

A risk assessment may not be needed if a hazard, the relevant risks and their control measures are well known. Remember, weather conditions aren't the only factor in determining whether heat may be hazardous. Heat may also be a hazard indoors, for example when working closely with machinery or in confined spaces.

3. CONTROL the risks

You need to control the risks related to:

- the work
- the worker
- the working environment

You must do everything that is reasonably practicable to eliminate the risks associated with working in heat. This may include cancelling certain work tasks, rescheduling tasks to cooler parts of the day or waiting for hot conditions to pass. If you cannot eliminate the risk, you must minimise it so far as is reasonably practicable. For example, in indoor workplaces, consider installing air-conditioners and providing fans to increase air-flow.

4. REVIEW the control measures

You must review control measures to ensure that they are working as planned and that they do not introduce new uncontrolled risks. For example, removing PPE to cool a worker down may introduce new hazards such as exposure to chemicals or solar ultraviolet radiation.

Read the *Guide to managing the risks of working in heat* on our website for more information about keeping you and your workers safe when working in heat.

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EXAMPLE

HAZARD:
It is a hot and humid day

RISK:
Your workers will be working outside during the day. One of your workers is older and has returned to work after being on leave for over 2 weeks.

CONTROL:

- Reschedule the work so that tasks can be done during cooler parts of the day.
- Plan tasks so they can be done inside or in a shaded area.
- Remind workers to stay hydrated and take regular breaks.
- Assign alternative duties to the workers who are at risk, for example the older worker who is returning from leave.
- Supervise your workers and monitor for signs of heat-related illness.