

## **TOOLBOX TALK #48**

### **WORK SAFELY IN THE HEAT**

Heat-related illnesses accounted for 783 worker deaths and nearly 70,000 serious injuries in the US from 1992 to 2016. And in 2018 alone, 3950 workers experienced days away from work as a result of non-fatal injuries and illnesses from on-the-job heat exposure.



Working in a hot environment can trigger ailments that include heat rash, heat cramps, heat exhaustion and heat stroke – considered a medical emergency. Symptoms of heat exhaustion include feeling faint or

dizzy; excessive sweating; cool, pale, clammy skin; nausea or vomiting; rapid, weak pulse; and muscle cramps. Workers who are experiencing heat exhaustion need to get to a cool, air-conditioned place. If fully conscious, they should drink water, take a cool shower and use a cold compress.

Workers with heatstroke may experience a headache but no sweating, and have a body temperature above 103°F. Other symptoms are red, hot, dry skin; nausea or vomiting; and loss of consciousness. Call 911 if a case of heat stroke is suspected, then take action to cool the worker until help arrives.

Other tips from OSHA to help prevent heat-related illnesses include:

- Drink water every 15 minutes.
- If working outside, take rest breaks in the shade to cool down.
- Wear a light-colored head covering and light-colored clothing when working outdoors.
- Monitor coworkers for symptoms of heat-related illnesses.

OSHA provides employer and worker resources for working in hot weather via its “Water. Rest. Shade.” campaign at [osha.gov](https://www.osha.gov).