



# Recognizing Heat Illness in the Workplace: A Tip Sheet for Managers & Employees



## Why It Matters

Heat-related illness can strike quickly—especially during summer. Whether working outdoors or in hot indoor environments, knowing how to identify and respond to early symptoms can prevent serious health consequences, including heat stroke and even death.

Heat illness exists on a spectrum, from mild symptoms to life-threatening emergencies.

**Early recognition saves lives.**

Stage	Key Symptoms	What to Do
Heat Rash	Red clusters of pimples or small blisters, usually on the neck, chest, groin, or elbow creases	Move to a cool, dry environment; keep area dry and clean
Heat Cramps	Muscle spasms in legs, arms, or abdomen; heavy sweating during intense activity	Rest in a cool place, sip electrolyte-rich fluids (e.g., sports drinks)
Heat Exhaustion	Heavy sweating, pale skin, rapid heartbeat, dizziness, nausea, headache, fainting	Move to shade or A/C, remove excess clothing, apply cool compresses, hydrate
Heat Stroke (Medical Emergency)	Body temp $\geq 103^{\circ}\text{F}$ , confusion, seizures, unconsciousness, hot/dry or profusely sweating skin	Call 911 immediately, cool the person quickly (ice packs, fans, cold water)

## Spot the Warning Signs

- Complaints of weakness, or headache
- Sudden disorientation or confusion
- Vomiting or inability to drink fluids
- Lack of sweating despite heat exposure
- Changes in behavior or alertness

## Prevention Is Key

- Hydration: Encourage frequent water breaks.
- Dress code: Allow breathable, sun-protective clothing.
- Break schedules: Rotate tasks and increase rest.
- Acclimatization: Gradually increase exposure for new or returning employees.