



Important message from Kentucky Labor Cabinet Secretary, Mark S. Brown

This week's weather in the Commonwealth has brought welcome relief from the extreme conditions of late June and early July. However, it surely will not be long before we see a return of the dangerous heat and humidity that are typical of Kentucky summers. It is important to remain vigilant throughout the summer months as these conditions can quickly become tragic.

The Kentucky Labor Cabinet is issuing this alert regarding the dangers of working in extreme heat. The following precautions are recognized methods to enhance the safety of employees at risk of heat-related illness:

- Provide plenty of cool water at the job site
- Have routinely scheduled rest breaks in shaded or air-conditioned areas
- Allow new employees to gradually increase their workload as they adjust to working in the heat

Employees of the Kentucky Labor Cabinet's Occupational Safety and Health Program are working hard this week to spread the word about staying safe while working in the extreme heat of summer. Field staff from the Kentucky Labor Cabinet's Division of Education and Training will be traveling across the state on a special outreach mission. They will be passing out information and providing free briefings to employers and workers related to the prevention of heat related illness. The outreach is designed to increase awareness of the signs and symptoms of heat stress and how to handle a heat-related health emergency at work.

Heat-related illness and fatalities are 100% preventable, but it will take all of us working together to ensure the safety and well-being of Kentucky's workforce. We are asking you to help us prevent further heat-related incidents this summer by distributing the information below.

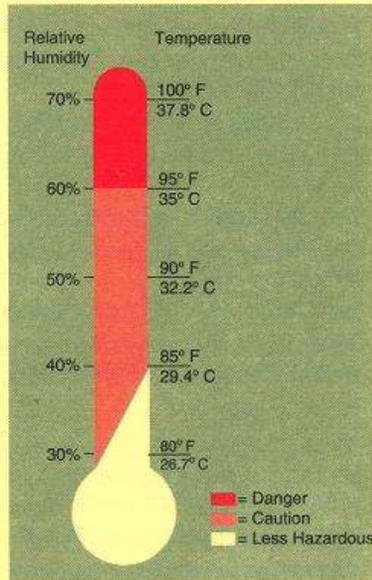
~ SEE PAGE 2 FOR CRITICAL LIFE-SAVING INFORMATION ~

Thank you for helping us in our efforts to keep Kentucky's working men and women safe on the job. The dangers of heat-related illness and fatalities are imminent during our hottest time of year, yet the prevention measures are so simple and inexpensive. You can save the life of a fellow worker just by providing this valuable information. ***Please, pass it on.***

THE HEAT EQUATION

**HIGH TEMPERATURE + HIGH HUMIDITY + PHYSICAL WORK
= HEAT ILLNESS**

When the body is unable to cool itself through sweating, **serious** heat illnesses may occur. The most severe heat-induced illnesses are **heat exhaustion** and **heat stroke**. If actions are not taken to treat heat exhaustion, the illness could progress to heat stroke and possible **death**.



HEAT EXHAUSTION

What Happens to the Body:

HEADACHES, DIZZINESS/LIGHT HEADEDNESS, WEAKNESS, MOOD CHANGES (irritable, or confused/can't think straight), FEELING SICK TO YOUR STOMACH, VOMITING/THROWING UP, DECREASED and DARK COLORED URINE, FAINTING/PASSING OUT, and PALE CLAMMY SKIN.

What Should Be Done:

- Move the person to a cool shaded area to rest. Don't leave the person alone. If the person is dizzy or light headed, lay them on their back and raise their legs about 6-8 inches. If the person is sick to their stomach lay them on their side.
- Loosen and remove any heavy clothing.
- Have the person drink some cool water (a small cup every 15 minutes) if they are not feeling sick to their stomach.
- Try to cool the person by fanning them. Cool the skin with a cool spray mist of water or wet cloth.
- If the person does not feel better in a few minutes call for emergency help (Ambulance or Call 911).

(If heat exhaustion is not treated, the illness may advance to heat stroke.)

HEAT STROKE—A MEDICAL EMERGENCY

What Happens to the Body:

DRY PALE SKIN (no sweating), HOT RED SKIN (looks like a sunburn), MOOD CHANGES (irritable, confused/not making any sense), SEIZURES/FITS, and COLLAPSE/PASSED OUT (will not respond).

What Should Be Done:

- Call for emergency help (Ambulance or Call 911).
- Move the person to a cool shaded area. Don't leave the person alone. Lay them on their back and if the person is having seizures/fits remove any objects close to them so they won't strike against them. If the person is sick to their stomach lay them on their side.
- Remove any heavy and outer clothing.
- Have the person drink some cool water (a small cup every 15 minutes) if they are alert enough to drink anything and not feeling sick to their stomach.
- Try to cool the person by fanning them. Cool the skin with a cool spray mist of water, wet cloth, or wet sheet.
- If ice is available, place ice packs under the arm pits and groin area.

How to Protect Workers

- Learn the signs and symptoms of heat-induced illnesses and what to do to help the worker.
- Train the workforce about heat-induced illnesses.
- Perform the heaviest work in the coolest part of the day.
- Slowly build up tolerance to the heat and the work activity (usually takes up to 2 weeks).
- Use the buddy system (work in pairs).
- Drink plenty of cool water (one small cup every 15-20 minutes)
- Wear light, loose-fitting, breathable (like cotton) clothing.
- Take frequent short breaks in cool shaded areas (allow your body to cool down).
- Avoid eating large meals before working in hot environments.
- Avoid caffeine and alcoholic beverages (these beverages make the body lose water and increase the risk for heat illnesses).

Workers Are at Increased Risk When

- They take certain medication (check with your doctor, nurse, or pharmacy and ask if any medicines you are taking affect you when working in hot environments).
- They have had a heat-induced illness in the past.
- They wear personal protective equipment (like respirators or suits).



PROVIDED TO YOU BY THE KENTUCKY LABOR CABINET, DEPARTMENT OF WORKPLACE STANDARDS,
OFFICE OF OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH, DIVISION OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL (502) 564-3070.