

**MADE SAFE NL**

## Heat Exposure and Injury Prevention

Working in hot environments can have both physical and psychological effects which can include:

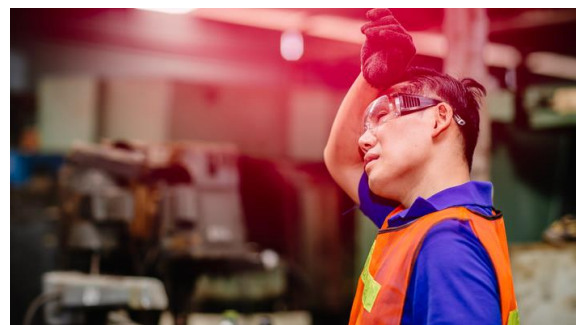
- **Physical Responses** – increased heart rate, increased sweating, muscle cramps, changes in breathing patterns, dizziness or feeling faint.
- **Psychological Changes** – changes in mood, increased irritation and aggression as well as problems with memory, attention and reaction time.

The combination of heat and dehydration means that people performing skilled tasks may become tired faster than normal and have trouble concentrating, resulting in increased risk of incidents or injuries.

Increased body temperature and physical discomfort promote irritability, frustration, and other emotional states that sometimes cause workers to overlook safety procedures or to divert their attention from critical tasks.

When it is too hot and too humid, workers tire more quickly and thereby may become more susceptible to musculoskeletal injury. Heat can also contribute to incidents in other ways such as trouble concentrating, sweaty palms resulting in reduced hand grip, dizziness resulting in increased risk of slips, trips and falls, and the fogging of safety glasses or respirator face pieces resulting in decreased visibility.

Aside from negative health effects, the U.S. National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) reports that the frequency of incidents, in general, appears to be higher in hot environments. Working in these environments can lower the mental alertness and physical performance of an individual.



Hot, humid days are not something we experience all year long here in our province, but summer can bring days where the temperature rises to levels we aren't acclimatized to. It is so important to stay hydrated, listen to what your body is telling you and communicate regularly with your manager or supervisor about any heat related hazards in your work.

Source: Adapted from Work Safe Alberta – Best Practice Working Safely in the Heat and Cold