

## Working in Heat

### Heat Illness

The human body can withstand small changes to core temperature before detrimental health effects occur. During activity the body will automatically attempt to maintain a constant temperature range by balancing out the heat gain and heat loss. Heat illness covers a range of medical conditions that can arise when the body is unable to properly cope with working in heat. These conditions include:

- heat stroke - a life threatening condition that requires immediate first aid and medical attention
- fainting, heat exhaustion, heat cramps, heat fatigue
- rashes (also called prickly heat)
- potential for increased aggravation of pre-existing illnesses and conditions

All members and their supervisors are encouraged to monitor, for the early signs and symptoms of heat illness through observation of self and others appearance and behaviour while undertaking work in hotter than usual conditions. Early signs and symptoms of a heat related illness may include but are not limited to;

- profuse sweating
- weakness
- nausea
- vomiting
- headache
- light-headedness
- muscle cramps
- confusion
- poor coordination

### Personal Controls

- Drink water prior to commencing work and regularly while performing work in the heat to sustain an adequate level of hydration
- Where possible stand in shaded areas or remain in vehicle (please note where air conditioning is available do not set temperature too low comparative to the outside ambient temperature).
- Maintain proper work / rest regimens where possible
- Where officers are unable to access drinking water at the work location prior arrangements are to be made for water to be available
- Maintain regular contact with communications and/or supervisor.

### Operational Factors / Specific High-Risk Scenarios

The following situations should be risk assessed and where required control strategies implemented to reduce the risk:

- Prolonged outdoor work during the hot season (October to March)
- Prolonged work outdoors in semi or direct exposure to solar radiation
- Prolonged physically demanding workloads
- Prolonged work in confined spaces where ventilation is limited and/or adjacent to hot surfaces or processes
- Prolonged work in protective overalls or chemical protective suits
- Exposure to any of the above situations where an individual's fitness for work in hot conditions is compromised due to their level of acclimatisation, hydration, health, fitness, and/or the consumption of medications.

### Final Consideration

Water is the best fluid to maintain proper body hydration. Eating at normal intervals is sufficient for maintaining electrolyte levels. Care must be taken relying on the intake of sports drinks, energy drinks, coffee, soda and other caffeinated beverages (caffeine contributes to dehydration). Do not take salt tablets unless your Doctor has specifically advised you to do so.



# URINE COLOUR TEST

Aim to produce urine no darker than colour 3 of the Urine Colour Chart against a white background. A desire to urinate less than twice per day and/or producing urine darker than colour 3 indicates significant dehydration; you must start drinking water immediately.



Legend:

- 1 = Optimal
- 2-3 = Well Hydrated
- 4-6 = Dehydrated (you need to drink more water)
- 7-8 = Seek Medical Aid



**Safety & Wellbeing**  
Health & Safety