



USAG – FS/HAAF Safety Gram

Sustaining, Supporting, and Defending Safety Excellence



SG #15-10

Working In the Summer Heat

Jun 15

The hot summer sun puts a whole new light on the workplace. Some people love the heat, while others can't wait for the dog days of summer to give way to blessed fall-like conditions. Regardless of your personal viewpoints on hot weather, everyone must take precautions to know and avoid heat illness.

Here are the warning signals of heat illness:

- Heat Cramps.** Heat cramps affects muscles such as those in the arms, legs and abdomen – the muscles that have been used while working. These cramps may occur after work, when the person is resting. Heat cramps are a signal that the body has lost too much salt through sweating.

- Heat Exhaustion.** Heat exhaustion is a serious condition that needs immediate attention. It may have any or all of these symptoms: A feeling of exhaustion, nausea, dizziness, pale and clammy skin, quick pulse, and low blood pressure. Heat exhaustion is also a warning that the mechanism that controls heat for the body becomes seriously overtaxed. Heat stroke may follow if heat exhaustion is not treated.

- Heat Stroke.** Heat stroke is a serious matter and it can be fatal. It occurs when the body's heat control mechanism simply shuts down. Perspiration stops and the body temperature rises. The heart pounds and the skin becomes flushed and hot. This condition is a medical emergency and must be treated immediately.

Here are some suggestions for smoother sailing in the summer:

- Let the water flow.** People often wait until they are thirsty to drink water but if you are doing physically demanding work and become dehydrated, you can't catch up and are at risk for potentially fatal heat illness. Employees need to be encouraged to drink water continuously on hot days and you must provide it.

- Take frequent rest breaks when working in hot conditions.** These breaks can consist of moving to a cooler area or switching to lighter work for a while.

- **Acclimate to working in hot conditions.** You cannot go from working in comfortable temperatures to working full tilt in a heat wave. Allow them frequent rest breaks in the shade and save extra-demanding physical jobs for cooler parts of the day.

- **Wear hats and dress in light-colored, lightweight, loose clothing.** They should be using sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15 and reapplying it if they are sweating it off. Workers who are overweight or have medical conditions should ask their doctors about additional precautions to take while working in hot conditions, whether indoors or outdoors.

- **Don't stop taking medication unless your doctor says you should.** Take extra care to stay cool and ask your doctor or pharmacist for any special heat advice.

- **Ventilate.** Ensure that indoor areas are kept well ventilated and that fans or air conditioners are operating.

- **Watch each other for signs of heat illness.** Mild cases can be treated by moving the person to a cool area and supplying water to drink. Heat stroke is a life-threatening condition that calls for immediate medical help.



Love the heat,
conditions,
precautions



Every summer many areas undergo periods of seriously hot weather. Make sure you know how to avoid heat illness at work and off the job. **Manage The Risk – Protect The Force** For additional information contact:

Your Unit Addition Duty Safety Officer (ADSO) or Collateral Duty Safety Person (CDSP), or USAG Installation Safety Office: Fort Stewart Office @ 912-767-6541; Hunter Army Airfield Office @ 912-345-4901.