



# Summer working

**Audience:** Site Operatives

**Presenter:** GHSEA, Site Manager, Trade Supervisors



## The Risk

- Too much exposure to UV radiation from the sun can cause skin damage including sunburn, blisters, skin aging and in the long term, skin cancer. Those with a family history of skin cancer (and those with pale skin/ fair hair) may be more at risk;
- Heat exhaustion and heat stroke; and
- Prickly heat or heat rash.



## What are the symptoms?

### Heat exhaustion

- Headache;
- Dizziness and confusion;
- Loss of appetite and feeling sick;
- Excessive sweating and pale, clammy skin;
- Cramps in the arms, legs and stomach;
- Fast breathing or pulse;
- A high temperature of 38°C or above; and
- Being very thirsty.

### Skin cancer

- Appearance of new moles or spots;
- Changes to shape, size, colour of moles and spots or if they itch, bleed or look crusty; and
- Moles or spots fail to heal.

### Heat stroke

- Altered mental state such as confusion, agitation, irritability, disorientation, delirium;
- Altered behaviour such as slurred speech, staggering;
- Seizures, coma;
- Alteration in sweat leading to dry skin;
- Headache;
- Dizziness or light headedness;
- Nausea and/or vomiting;
- Flushed or reddened skin;
- Rapid or fast breathing and heart beat; and
- Muscle weakness or cramps.

### Prickly heat / heat rash

- Small, raised spots;
- Feeling itchy / prickly; and
- Mild swelling.



## Prevention and Protection

- Drink plenty of cold (non-alcoholic) drinks, especially when carrying out physically demanding work;
- Wear light-coloured, loose clothing – this does not prevent you from complying with the requirement to wear hi viz vests/ T shirts or polo shirts, remember to keep your top on;
- Sprinkle water over skin or clothes;
- Where possible avoid the sun between 11:00 and 15:00 and try to work in the shade;
- Apply sun cream with a minimum SPF 50 – this should be available on site; and
- Regularly check any moles or spots for changes in appearance and seek medical advice if necessary.



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## What to do if someone is suffering from heat exhaustion/stroke

- Move them to a cool place;
- Get them to lie down and raise their feet slightly;
- Get them to drink plenty of water (sports or rehydration drinks are also ok);
- Cool their skin by spraying or sponge them with cool water and fan them; and
- If to hand, cold packs around the armpits or neck would also help.

Stay with the patient until they are feeling better, they should start to cool down and feel an improvement in their wellbeing within 30 minutes.

Even if the patient begins to feel better they must be sent home and not be permitted to work for the remainder of the day.



## When to seek emergency assistance

An ambulance must be called if the patient:

- Is still feeling unwell after 30 minutes of resting in a cool place and drinking plenty of water;
- Is not sweating even while feeling too hot;
- Has a high temperature of 40°C or above;
- Has fast breathing or shortness of breath;
- Is feeling confused;
- Has a fit (seizure);
- Has loss of consciousness; and/or
- Is not responsive.

Heatstroke can be very serious if not treated quickly and the patient must be put in the recovery position if they lose consciousness whilst awaiting the emergency services.