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**WORK
ZONE**



August 2016

Heat Hacks: The Importance of Keeping Employees Cool

The temperature is rising, but that doesn't mean the number of heat-related employee accidents has to. With the heat index reaching triple digits across the country, it is vital for workers to remain cool on the jobsite. Equally as important, employers need to be sure they are conscious of the dangers that often accompany rising temperatures and react with appropriate measures for employee protection.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has a yearly [campaign to prevent heat illness](#) in outdoor workers. The campaign aims to remind workers and employers that — despite the fact that heat illnesses are preventable — 2,630 workers suffered from heat-related illnesses in 2014 alone (e.g. heat exhaustion, heat cramps, heat rash or heat stroke). By being mindful of the following, the outdoor workplace can remain safe despite escalating summer heat:

Know the signs and symptoms of heat illness.

To combat heat illness before it's too late, you must know what to look for and have a first aid kit handy. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention has an excellent [quick reference guide](#) that outlines the differences between ailments brought on by heat stress.

Water. Rest. Shade.

OSHA's campaign dictates these are three essentials that employers must provide outdoor workers. Workers should drink water every 15 minutes, even if they don't feel thirsty. This should add up to about one liter of water over one hour or one cup every 15 minutes. Additionally, employees should be sure to take regular breaks in the shade or air-conditioning in order to reduce stress on the body and cool down.

Acclimatization.

According to OSHA's [Heat Fact Sheet](#), acclimatization is the physical change that allows the body to build tolerance to working in the heat. Full acclimatization may take up to 14 days or longer. This is especially important for temporary workers to recognize; if they are unaccustomed to working in hot temperatures, then their rate of acclimatization will be slower than permanent workers who have already built a tolerance. OSHA prescribes that new workers begin with 20 percent of the workload on the first day, increasing incrementally by no more than 20 percent each subsequent day.

Adjust the work schedule accordingly.

Someone at the job site should be put in charge of monitoring heat conditions, remaining conscious of the heat index and making any necessary changes to the shift, if needed. This can include implementing rotating shift work for employees or changing work start and end times in order to position physically demanding work during cooler parts of the day. If you're unsure of whether conditions are unsafe, download OSHA's [Heat Safety App](#) available for Android or iPhone. It calculates heat index and risk level at your jobsite with appropriate suggestions.

"Reflective clothing, such as safety vests, worn as loosely as possible, can minimize heat illness. Water-dampened cotton whole-body suits are an inexpensive and effective personal cooling technique. Cooling vests with pockets that hold cold packs are comfortable and effective."

- [National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health \(NIOSH\) Fact Sheet](#)



A MESSAGE FROM CHRIS

These heat-battling techniques can offer eye-opening knowledge to any company, and especially those using temporary employees, to help ensure employees are protected during the warm weather months. It can take between five and seven days for a worker to become acclimated to the bodily changes caused by heat, a fact that is even more crucial to keep in mind when dealing with temporary work placements where employees are unaccustomed to their environment.

At AdvantaStaff, it's imperative that our workers are as prepared and well-trained as possible when on the jobsite. With summer heat comes new challenges, but we want to be sure our employees and host employers are cognizant of the risks of occupational heat exposure and implement best practices.

I invite you to contact me at chris.chandler@advantastaff.com if you have any questions or wish to learn more about AdvantaStaff.

Best,
Christine Chandler
President of AdvantaStaff

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