

18-10 Working in High Temperature Conditions

Introduction

There is lots of good advice about keeping safe in the sun and working in high temperatures contained in alerts issued by our Frameworks and partners, which you should read and follow.

In this Stantec Treatment Alert we want to stress the importance of risk assessing the work we do in line with conditions on the day work is carried out – be that hot, cold, rain, snow or ice. Ambient conditions change so we need to adapt our work plan to suit. In the advice below we focus on working in high temperatures but the principles apply to other extreme ambient conditions

Working in high temperatures

When working outdoors, extreme weather conditions (e.g. high temperatures) can have a significant effect on workers' health if the right controls and measures have not been identified and put in place



It's important we recognise the potential for certain weather condition to cause harm and carry out specific risk assessments relevant to working under those conditions. When assessing risk we need to consider both personal and environmental factors,

- 'Personal factors' include body activity, the amount and type of clothing, and duration of exposure.
- 'Environmental factors' include ambient temperature, radiant heat, sunlight, wind velocity and the presence of rain or snow

Finally we need monitor to make sure that the controls and measures we have put in place are effective.

Below is a 5 point plan for managing safe working in high heat conditions –please make sure you adopt it or a similar equivalent if working under a JV partners systems and procedures

1. Be aware of heat-related illnesses and symptoms
2. Risk Assess for specific weather / temperature conditions
3. Implement controls and measures for safe working in high temperatures & Monitor to make sure they are working
4. Engage and prepare the workforce
5. Be vigilant & act rapidly if someone is showing signs of heat related illness

1. Be aware of heat-related illnesses and symptoms

- When working in high temperatures, the main heat related illnesses are:**
- Dehydration
 - Overheating
 - Heat stress
 - Heatstroke

- Other potential risks**
- There are other potential risks of injury to self or others if e.g. working at height, in confined spaces or operating plant or machinery at the time symptoms strike.

- Typical symptoms of heat related illness are:**
- an inability to concentrate
 - muscle cramps
 - heat rash
 - severe thirst
 - heat exhaustion - fatigue, giddiness, nausea, headache, moist skin
 - heat stroke - hot dry skin, confusion, convulsions and eventual loss of consciousness. (which can result in death if not detected at an early stage)

More information can be found on the following government web pages

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg337.pdf>

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/temperature/heatstress/>

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/temperature/thermal/factors.htm>

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg147.pdf>

2 & 3. Risk Assess for specific conditions and Implement controls and measures for safe working in high temperatures

Plan in advance

- Identify potential high temperature indoor and outdoor areas and carry out specific risk assessments
- Reschedule work to cooler times of the day.
- Rotate workers and /or add extra personnel for physically demanding tasks so that the shared work load is less intense.

Enhance Welfare Facilities

- Provide more frequent rest breaks
- Provide easy access to cool drinking water.
- Promote removal of PPE when not working to facilitate heat loss.
- Introduce shade / mechanical cooling in rest areas

Monitor and Supervise

- Monitor workers for signs of heat-related illness, and carry out routine checks to make sure workers are making use of water and shade.

4. Engage & Prepare the workforce

- Educate and inform workforce to recognise early signs of heat related illness.
- Encourage workforce to wear sun cream & drink plenty of water
- Set up a buddy system to enable workers to look out for signs and symptoms of heat-related illness in each other.

Advice for workers

- Know the symptoms of heat related-illnesses and watch for them in yourself and others
- Bring a water bottle to work and drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration
- Protect yourself from the Sun - cover up & use a high factor sunscreen on exposed skin.
- When on your breaks - take off or loosen your PPE, stay in the shade and rest
- If you feel unwell, stop work immediately and tell your workmates or a supervisor.
- Check your skin regularly for any unusual moles or spots. See your doctor if you find anything unusual.

5. Be vigilant and act rapidly

- Anyone exhibiting signs of a heat related illness needs immediate medical attention by a qualified First Aider. Early treatment can prevent a more serious medical emergency.
- Milder symptoms (headache, weakness) can be treated by providing rest in a shaded area and cool water to drink.
- If someone loses consciousness or appears confused or uncoordinated -these are signs of possible heat stroke. **Call 999 immediately as heat stroke can be fatal if not treated immediately!**

