Every year, thousands of workers become sick from exposure to heat, and some even die. **Heat-related illnesses and deaths are preventable.**

**What is heat-related illness?**
The body normally cools itself by sweating. During hot weather, especially with high humidity, sweating isn't enough. Body temperature can rise to dangerous levels if precautions are not taken such as drinking water frequently and resting in the shade or air conditioning. Heat illnesses range from heat rash and heat cramps to heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Heat stroke requires **immediate medical attention** and can result in **death**.

**How can heat-related illness be prevented?**
Employers should establish a complete heat illness prevention program to prevent heat illness. This includes: provide workers with water, rest and shade; gradually increase workloads and allow more frequent breaks for new workers or workers who have been away for a week or more to build a tolerance for working in the heat (**acclimatization**); modify work schedules as necessary; plan for emergencies and train workers about the symptoms of heat-related illnesses and their prevention; and monitor workers for signs of illness. **Workers new to the heat or those that have been away from work and are returning can be most vulnerable to heat stress and they must be acclimatized (see box).**

To prevent heat-related illness and fatalities:
- Drink water every 15 minutes, even if you are not thirsty.
- Rest in the shade to cool down.
- Wear a hat and light-colored clothing.
- Learn the signs of heat illness and what to do in an emergency.
- Keep an eye on fellow workers.
- "Easy does it" on your first days of work in the heat. You need to get used to it.

If workers are new to working in the heat or returning from more than a week off, and for all workers on the first day of a sudden heat wave, implement a work schedule to allow them to get used to the heat gradually. Working in full sunlight can increase heat index values by 15 degrees Fahrenheit. Keep this in mind and plan additional precautions for working in these conditions.

**Remember these three simple words: Water, Rest, Shade.** Taking these precautions can mean the difference between life and death.
The "heat index" is a single value that takes both temperature and humidity into account. The higher the heat index, the hotter the weather feels, since sweat does not readily evaporate and cool the skin. The heat index is a better measure than air temperature alone for estimating the risk to workers from environmental heat sources.

<table>
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<th>Heat Index</th>
<th>Risk Level</th>
<th>Protective Measures</th>
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<tr>
<td>Less than 91°F</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Basic heat safety and planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>91-103°F</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Implement precautions and heighten awareness</td>
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<tr>
<td>103-115°F</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Additional precautions to protect workers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater than 115°F</td>
<td>Very High to Extreme</td>
<td>Triggers even more aggressive protective measures</td>
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**Actions for Low Risk Level (heat index is less than 91°F)**
- Most people can work safely when the heat index is <91°F with only basic measures for worker safety and health. As minimum measures, employers have a duty to:
  - Provide adequate amounts of drinking water.
  - Ensure that adequate medical services are available.

**Actions for Moderate Risk Level (heat index is 91‐103°F)**
- At the moderate risk level some additional precautions are needed to prevent heat-related illness. Review heat-related illness signs and precautions. Drink water. Try to rest in cool, shaded areas. Be aware of conditions that could increase risk.

**Actions for High Risk Level (heat index is 103-115°F)**
- As the heat index rises above 103°F, there is a high risk for heat-related illness, so additional protective measures are needed. Increase rest periods and designate a knowledgeable person (well-informed on heat-related illness) at the worksite to determine appropriate work/rest schedules. Reduce work load and pace strenuous work tasks. Drink plenty of water every 15 to 20 minutes.

**Actions for Very High to Extreme Risk Conditions: (Heat Index Greater Than 115°F)**
- In addition to the precautions already identified, even more protective measures are needed. Re-schedule non-essential work activities and move essential work tasks to a time during the work shift when the heat index is lower. **If this is not possible**, establish a water drinking schedule, enforce work/rest schedules, and be extra vigilant in monitoring co-workers for heat-related illness symptoms.
Am I Hydrated?
Urine Color Chart

This urine color chart is a simple tool you can use to assess if you are drinking enough fluids throughout the day to stay hydrated.

If your urine matches the colors numbered 1, 2, or 3 you are hydrated.

If your urine matches the colors numbered 4 through 8 you are dehydrated and need to drink for more fluid.

Be Aware! If you are taking single vitamin supplements or a multivitamin supplement, some of the vitamins in the supplements can change the color of your urine for a few hours, making it bright yellow or discolored.