# Heat Illness Prevention

R.W. LaPine Inc.
MECHANICAL CONTRACTORS

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**Purpose:**

This program is designed to reduce the risk of work-related heat illnesses.

**Scope:**

This procedure applies to all work being performed in hot environments.

**Definitions:**

"Acclimatization" means temporary adaptation of the body to work in the heat that occurs gradually when a person is exposed to it. Acclimatization peaks in most people within four to fourteen days of regular work for at least two hours per day in the heat.

"Heat Illness" means a serious medical condition resulting from the body's inability to cope with a particular heat load, and includes heat cramps, heat exhaustion, heat syncope and heat stroke.

"Preventative recovery period" means a period of time to recover from the heat in order to prevent heat illness.

"Shade" means blockage of direct sunlight. Canopies, umbrellas and other temporary structures or devices may be used to provide shade. One indicator that blockage is sufficient is when objects do not cast a shadow in the area of blocked sunlight. Shade is not adequate when heat in the area of shade defeats the purpose of shade, which is to allow the body to cool. For example, a car sitting in the sun does not provide acceptable shade to a person inside it, unless the car is running with air conditioning.

**Requirements:**

All managers and supervisors are responsible for implementing and maintaining the Heat Illness Program in their work areas.

**Provision of Water**

Employees shall have access to potable drinking water. Employees shall have access to potable drinking water. Where it is not plumbed or otherwise continuously supplied, it shall be provided in sufficient quantity at the beginning of the work shift.

**Access to Shade**

Employees will be provided with access to shade. Employees suffering from heat illness or believing a preventative recovery period is needed shall be provided access to an area with shade that is either open to the air or provided with ventilation or cooling. Such access to shade shall be permitted at all times.

**Control Measures**

Each work location involved in working in hot environments should implement measures that help to control the effects of environmental factors that can contribute to heat related illnesses. The most common environmental factors are air temperature, humidity, radiant heat sources and air circulation.

Physical factors that can contribute to heat related illness shall be taken into consideration before performing a task. The most common physical factors that can contribute to heat related illness are type of work, level of physical activity and duration, and clothing color, weight and breathability.

Supervisors must ensure personal factors that contribute to heat related illness are taken into consideration before assigning a task where there is the possibility of a heat-related illness occurring. The most common personal factors that can contribute to heat related illness are age, weight, fitness, drug/alcohol use, prior heat-related illness, etc.

Each work site shall develop site specific procedures but shall include the minimum:

- Be sure water is provided at the start of the shift and the supervisors/designated persons will monitor water containers every 30 minutes, and employees are encouraged to report to supervisor/designated person low levels or dirty water.
- Supervisors will provide frequent reminders to employees to drink frequently.
- Every morning there will be short tailgate meetings to remind workers about the importance of frequent consumption of water throughout the shift during hot weather.
- Place water containers as close as possible to the workers.
- When drinking water levels within a container drop below 50%, the water should be replenished immediately or water levels should not fall below the point that will allow for adequate water during the time necessary to effect replenishment.
- Disposable/single use drinking cups will be provided to employees or provisions will be made to issue employees their own cups each day.
- Supervisors should set up umbrellas, canopies or other portable devices at the start of the shift and relocate them to be closer to the crew, as needed.
- Non-agricultural employers can use other cooling measures if they demonstrate that these methods are as effective as shade.

Working hours will be modified to work during the cooler hours of the day, when possible.

When a modified or shorter work-shift is not possible, more water and rest breaks will be provided. Supervisors will continuously check all employees and stay alert to the presence of heat related symptoms.

Supervisors will carry cell phones or other means of communication, to ensure that emergency services can be called and check that these are functional at the worksite prior to each shift.

Every morning, workers will be reminded about address and directions to the worksite to inform medical responders and emergency procedures.

All newly hired workers will be monitored by the supervisor or experienced coworker to ensure that they understood the training and follow the company procedures.

**Training:**

Training in the following topics shall be provided to all supervisory and non-supervisory employees:

- The environmental and personal risk factors for heat illness;
- The importance of frequent consumption of small quantities of water, up to 4 cups per hour, when the work environment is hot and employees are likely to be sweating more than usual in the performance of their duties;
- The importance of acclimatization;
- The different types of heat illness and the common signs and symptoms of heat illness;
- The importance to employees of immediately reporting to the employer, directly or through the employee's supervisor, symptoms or signs of heat illness in themselves, or in co-workers;
- Proper procedures for responding to symptoms of possible heat illness, including how emergency medical services will be provided should they become necessary;
- Proper procedures for contacting emergency medical services, and if necessary, for transporting employees to a point where they can be reached by an emergency medical service provider;
- Proper procedures for ensuring that, in the event of an emergency, clear and precise directions to the work site can and will be provided as needed to emergency responders.

Supervisors must receive training in the prevention of heat related illnesses prior to supervising employees working in heat. Supervisors shall be trained in heat illness emergency response procedures to prevent heat illness and procedures to follow when an employee exhibits symptoms consistent with possible heat illness, including emergency response procedures.

Communication for employees shall be in a form readily understandable by all affected employees.

RW LaPine Inc. shall ensure that all employees working outdoors have been trained in heat illness prevention.