



Heat Illness



Heat-related illness is most often associated with outdoor venues; however, it is important to remember heat-related illnesses can also occur while working indoors when air conditioning is not available.

Performers may be susceptible to heat-related illnesses as a result of wearing heavy costumes and/or exerting physical efforts under the stage lights. Heat illness is a serious medical condition resulting from the body's inability to cope with a particular heat load and includes sunburn, heat rash, heat cramps, heat syncope (fainting and dizziness), heat exhaustion, and life-threatening heat stroke.

Basic Guidelines

1. Consult with the EH&S Department and refer to the Campus-specific Heat Illness Prevention Program, procedures, and training requirements.
2. Know the environmental conditions that increase the risk of heat illness, such as high air temperatures, high humidity, exposure to sun light, exposure to heat generating equipment, lack of air movement, physical exertion intensity and duration, and the clothing, such as personal protective equipment (PPE) or costumes.
3. Know the personal conditions that increase the risk of heat illness, such as medications, age, weight, physical fitness, alcohol consumption, caffeine consumption, water consumption, food, and other physical conditions.
4. Ensure shade is available when outdoor temperatures reach or exceed 85°F.
5. Ensure cool water is available throughout the work shift.
6. Learn to recognize the signs and symptoms of heat illness, such as rashes, muscle pains and spasms, dizziness, light-headedness, heavy sweating, headache, nausea or vomiting, paleness, fatigue, and weakness. Symptoms of heat stroke include red, hot, dry skin; very high body temperature; dizziness; nausea; confusion; strange behavior or unconsciousness; rapid pulse or throbbing headache.
7. Immediately summon emergency medical assistance for anyone exhibiting the signs and/or symptoms of heat exhaustion or heat stroke.

Protect Yourself

1. Pre-hydrate and stay hydrated. Women: drink at least 9 eight-ounce glasses of water on a daily basis. Men: drink at least 12 eight-ounce glasses of water on a daily basis. It takes about three days to hydrate your body; so it is important to maintain the habit of drinking the minimum amount of water every day.
2. Drink at least one quart of water every hour.
3. Report to your supervisor or instructor immediately if water is not available.
4. Avoid caffeinated beverages that de-hydrate the body, such as coffee, tea, colas, and energy drinks.

5. Avoid alcohol as it dehydrates the body.
6. Eat lighter meals when working in hot conditions.
7. Pace yourself if you are not accustomed to working in warm or hot environments. Start work slowly and pick up the pace gradually.
8. Seek shade and/or a cool area to rest if you begin experiencing symptoms such as dizziness, headache, weakness, fatigue.
9. Loosen or remove PPE and heavy costumes whenever they are not needed.
10. Immediately report any heat illness symptoms to your supervisor or instructor.
11. Summon emergency medical assistance when necessary. While waiting move the person to a cool shady area, loosen or remove heavy clothing, provide cool drinking water, and fan the person.

Talk to your supervisor if you have any questions about this information.