



# STAY SAFE WHEN WORKING IN THE HEAT

## HEATWAVE SAFETY FOR OUTDOOR WORKERS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Hot weather increases the risk of heat-related illness for people who work outside. Construction workers, landscapers, farmers, road crews, delivery workers, utility workers, and others who do hard physical work outdoors are especially vulnerable when it's hot. This flyer explains how to protect your health during hot weather and heatwaves.

### Why heat is dangerous at work

When temperatures are high:

- Your body works harder to cool itself, which increases sweating and fluid loss.
- Dehydration, heat exhaustion, and even heat stroke can occur quickly.
- Extreme heat can reduce concentration and increase the risk of accidents.

### Heat Illness – Recognise the Signs

**Heat Exhaustion:** Intense sweating, weakness or tiredness, headache, dizziness, nausea or vomiting

**Heat Stroke:** A MEDICAL EMERGENCY with high body temperature, confusion or difficulty speaking, loss of consciousness, and / or very hot, dry skin

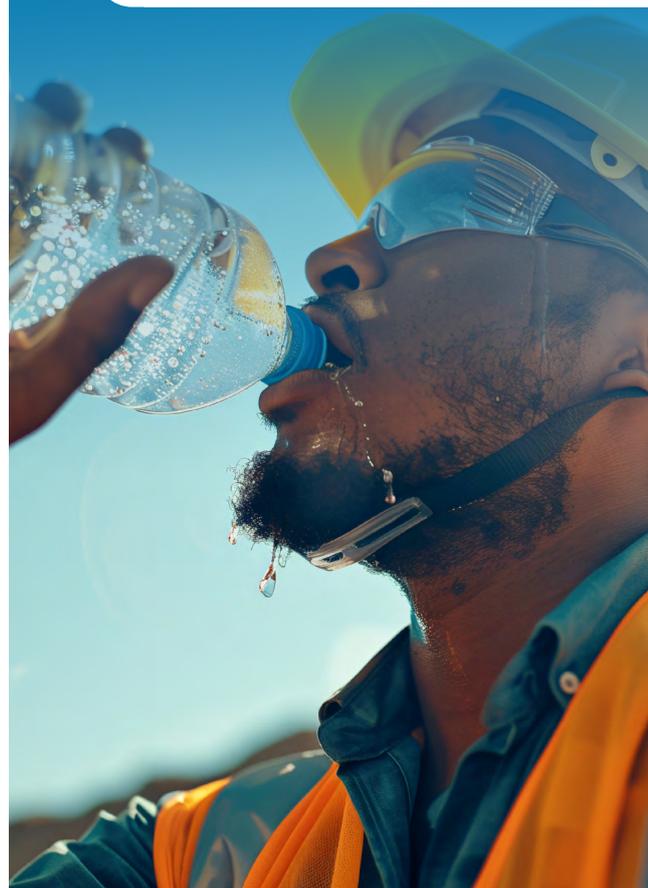
If someone shows signs of heat stroke, stop work and get medical help immediately.

### Failure to manage heat hazards can harm workers' health.

Heat can make outdoor work dangerous if you're unprepared. But with water, shade, planned work schedules, and team awareness, you can stay safe and healthy during hot weather.

### How to Protect Yourself During Hot Weather

- Stay hydrated
- Rest in shade in cool areas
- Plan work smartly
- Wear heat-friendly clothing
- Watch out for each other





# How to Protect Yourself During Hot Weather



## Stay Hydrated

Drink water regularly even before you feel thirsty.  
Aim to drink water throughout the day.  
Avoid energy drinks, excess caffeine, and alcohol.



**Tip: Carry a personal water bottle on site and refill often.**



## Rest in Shade in Cool Areas

Take frequent breaks out of the sun.  
If available, take breaks in a shaded or ventilated rest area.  
Aim to rest if you begin to feel unwell.



## Plan Work Smartly

Schedule heavy tasks for cooler parts of the day (early morning or late afternoon).  
Avoid hard work during the hottest hours (often 10:00 to 16:00).  
Take more breaks on extremely hot days.



## Wear Heat-Friendly Clothing

Loose-fitting, light-coloured, breathable fabrics help reduce heat absorption.  
Wear a wide-brimmed hat or safety helmet with sun protection.  
Reapply sunscreen as needed.

## Watch Out for Each Other



Look for symptoms of heat illness in your co-workers and yourself.  
Use a buddy system — check your team regularly.  
If someone feels faint, dizzy, or weak, stop work and rest.

## Cooling Strategies



Wet cloths on the neck, face, or splash water on skin when resting.  
Use portable shade or cooling stations if available.  
Seek air-conditioned spaces during breaks or after work where possible.

## Employer Responsibilities



**Under South African law, employers are required to:**

Assess heat risk in the workplace  
Provide safe work practices and rest breaks  
Ensure water is available to workers  
Train workers on heat hazards and symptoms

## Failure to manage heat hazards can harm workers' health.

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