

Work Arrangement

Reschedule work to cooler periods in the daytime (such as early morning) and cooler places (such as covered or shaded areas)

Minimise physical demand by using mechanical aids at work



Arrange employees to rest regularly in a cool or shady place during very hot periods



Rotate employees to work in hot and cool workplaces alternately

Some employees may have difficulties in adapting to the hot work environment because of their health condition or the effects of drugs. When assigning work to these employees, their physical health and the recommendations of their attending doctors should be considered.

Supply of cool potable water

- Provide cool potable water for employees at all times during work
- Encourage employees to take plenty of water or other appropriate beverages to replenish the fluid and electrolytes lost through sweating



Suitable clothing



Wide-brimmed hats or safety helmets with neck protectors can avoid exposure of face and neck to direct sunlight

Light-coloured clothing minimises heat absorption and enhances heat dissipation

Air-permeable clothing enhances heat dissipation

Loose-fitting clothing enhances sweat evaporation but clothing that is too loose may be entangled in the moving parts of machines

Enquiries

If you wish to enquire about this leaflet or other Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) matters, please contact the Occupational Safety and Health Branch of the Labour Department:

Tel.: 2852 4041 or
2559 2297 (auto-recording service available outside office hours)

Fax: 2581 2049

Email: enquiry@labour.gov.hk

Information on the services offered by the Labour Department and on major labour legislation is also available on our website at www.labour.gov.hk.

For details on the services offered by the Occupational Safety and Health Council, please call 2739 9000 or browse the website at www.oshc.org.hk.

Complaints

If you have any complaint about unsafe operations or environments at workplaces, please call the Labour Department's OSH complaint hotline at 2542 2172 or fill in and submit an online OSH complaint form on our website. All complaints will be treated in the strictest confidence.



Online OSH complaint Form

This leaflet is issued free of charge and can be obtained from offices of the Occupational Health Service of the Labour Department. It can also be downloaded from the Labour Department website at www.labour.gov.hk. For enquiries about addresses and telephone numbers of the offices, please visit the Labour Department website or call 2852 4041.

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Prevention of Heat Stroke at Work in a Hot Environment



In accordance with the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance (Cap.509) and subsidiary legislation, employers must, so far as reasonably practicable, ensure the safety and health at work of their employees, including the provision of sufficient potable water at the workplace.

Summer days in Hong Kong are hot and humid in general. This leaflet lists some appropriate measures that should be taken by employers and employees to prevent heat-related illnesses, including heat cramps, heat syncope, heat exhaustion and heat stroke, when working in a hot environment.

Risk factors

-  High temperature
-  High humidity (hinders sweat evaporation)
-  Poor ventilation
-  High radiant heat load (e.g. exposure to direct sunlight)
-  Heavy manual work
-  Inappropriate clothing
-  Employees' health condition


In assessing employees' risk of contracting heat-related illnesses, employers must consider all the above risk factors, rather than relying on a single factor (such as temperature).

Occupations with a higher risk of heat-related illnesses





Heat-related illnesses and their symptoms









Heat cramps

-  Muscle cramps and pain in four limbs or the abdomen






Heat syncope

-  Dizziness or syncope
-  Fainting during prolonged standing or when suddenly rising from a sitting or lying position

Heat exhaustion

-  Headache
-  Nausea
-  Dizziness
-  Thirst
-  Shortness of breath
-  Heavy sweating
-  Elevated body temperature
-  Confusion

Heat stroke


-  Body temperature reaches 41°C or above
-  Convulsion
-  Hot and dry skin is common but sweating may occur when doing heavy manual work
-  Confusion
-  Loss of consciousness




Whenever there are symptoms of heat-related illnesses, stop the work or the activity immediately and inform supervisors to take appropriate actions.


Preventive Measures

Work Environment

-  Isolate high-temperature facilities at the workplace

-  Use appropriate ventilation or air-conditioning systems



-  Avoid working under direct sunlight and set up temporary shelter whenever possible

