WORKING IN THE HEAT

HEAT STRESS



Know the signs. Act fast. Look out for each other.

Your body cools itself by sweating. When it gains heat faster than it can lose it, your core temperature climbs. **Heat illness can get worse fast, and heat stroke can kill.**

WHAT RAISES THE RISK

It's not just the temperature

- **Hot days** and heatwaves
- **High humidity** sweat can't evaporate
- **Direct sun** and hot surfaces
- **Little air** movement
- **Heavy or** fast work
- **PPE and heavy** clothing
- **New or back** from time off
- **Dehydrated, unwell** or some medicines

KNOW THE SIGNS

Confusion is a red flag

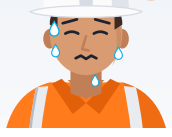
MILD → LIFE-THREATENING



HEAT RASH

- Itchy rash of small red spots
- Caused by heavy sweating

Cool down and keep skin dry



HEAT CRAMPS

- Painful muscle cramps or spasms
- Usually legs or stomach
- During or after hard, sweaty work

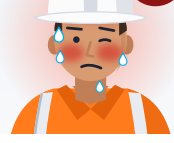
Rest somewhere cool, sip fluids



HEAT EXHAUSTION

- Heavy sweating, pale skin
- Dizzy, faint, weak or very tired
- Headache, nausea or vomiting
- Fast, weak pulse, quick breathing

Stop work now: first aid below



HEAT STROKE

- Confused, slurred speech, clumsy
- Hot skin: may be dry OR sweaty
- Seizure, collapse or unconscious
- Body temperature above about 40°C

Medical emergency: call 000

FIRST AID: ACT FAST

If in doubt, call 000 · Never leave them alone

HEAT EXHAUSTION

Stop work and move them somewhere cool
Shade or air-con. Have them lie down.

Take off the hard hat and extra PPE
Loosen tight clothing.

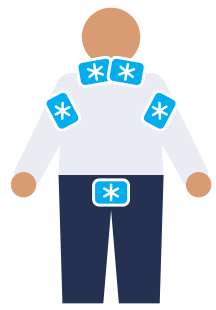
Cool them down
Wet cloths or cool water on the skin, and fan them.

Sips of cool water
Only if fully alert and able to swallow.

Stay with them
Call 000 if they vomit, pass out, get worse or aren't better within 10 minutes.

HEAT STROKE: CALL 000

1. **Call 000 now.** Then start cooling straight away.
2. **Best:** put them in cold water up to the neck, if you can.
3. **Otherwise:** soak with cold water, fan hard, and put cold packs on the neck, armpits and groin.
4. **Drinks only if fully conscious** and able to swallow.
5. **Unresponsive?** Recovery position. Not breathing normally? Start CPR.
6. **Keep cooling** until the ambulance arrives, or until they start shivering.



Cold packs: neck, armpits, groin

PREVENT IT

Every hot day, every job

Drink often

Start the shift hydrated. Small amounts, often, all day. Don't wait until you're thirsty.

Cool breaks

Rest in shade or air-con. Take more breaks as it gets hotter.

Plan the hot work

Heavy work early or late. Use mechanical aids. Check the heatwave forecast.

Ease into it

New, or back from leave? Your body takes 1 to 2 weeks to adjust. Build up gradually.

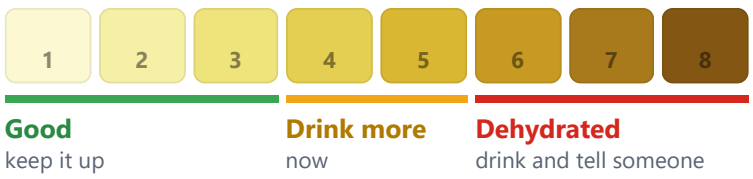
Dress for heat

Light-coloured, loose, breathable long sleeves. Brim and sunscreen.

Watch your mates

Know the signs and check on each other, especially new starters.

Check your urine



Don't rely on thirst. It goes away before you've replaced what you sweated out. Sweating heavily? Add an **electrolyte drink**. Go easy on caffeine and energy drinks, and no alcohol.

THE LAW IN QUEENSLAND

There is no set heat limit or "stop work" temperature. The risk depends on the weather, the work and the worker.

WORK SAFETY QLD WHS TEMPLATES

Employers must
manage heat risks so far as reasonably practicable, including safe conditions for work in extreme heat, and drinking water.
WHS Act 2011 s19 · WHS Regulation 2011 ss40–41

Workers must
take reasonable care for their own and others' safety, and follow reasonable instructions.
WHS Act 2011 s28

You can stop work
if you reasonably believe it exposes you to a serious, immediate risk. Tell your supervisor.
WHS Act 2011 s84

Sources: Safe Work Australia, *Managing the risks of working in heat* (2021) · Managing the Work Environment and Facilities Code of Practice 2021 (Qld) · WHSQ · Queensland Health · ANZCOR Guideline 9.3.4 · WHS Act 2011 and WHS Regulation 2011 (Qld). General safety information, not medical advice.