



Farm tasks generally require outdoor activities. Working in hot and humid conditions increases the risk of life-threatening heat-related illnesses. Take measures to protect yourself and others on your farm during extreme heat situations.

Before Excessive Heat Situations

- **Stay informed.**
 - Monitor for heat advisories in your area at the NOAA National Weather Service. <http://www.weather.gov/>
 - Listen to local news and weather channels during extreme heat conditions for health and safety updates.
- **Know the terminology.**
 - **Excessive Heat Advisory:** An excessive heat event is occurring; prolonged exposure or strenuous activity might result in a heat-related illness.
 - **Excessive Heat Warning:** Life-threatening heat is occurring. Take precautions immediately!
- **Discuss heat precautions with those that work on your farm.**
 - Limit or avoid activity during the day.
 - Keep hydrated; drinking at least every 15 minutes.
 - Train workers on how to minimize heat stress and to recognize the signs of heat illness.
- **Establish shade or cool areas on your farm.**
 - Designate areas for workers to go to cool off.
 - Set up awnings, canopies, if natural shade is not available.
 - Provide sources of water.
- **Prepare for power outages.**
 - High summertime temperatures increase energy demand for cooling; overloaded energy systems can result in power outages.
 - For more information see the Power Outage handouts in this manual.

During Excessive Heat Situations

- **If you (or farm workers) must be outdoors**
 - Limit activities to the morning and evening hours; avoid mid-day.
 - Avoid strenuous activities.
 - Take frequent breaks (10-20 minutes each hour), preferably in shade or an air conditioned area.
 - Drink 1-2 quarts of cool water every hour; avoid ice cold water as this can cause stomach cramps.
 - Wear lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing.
 - Wear a wide-brimmed hat, sunglasses and sunscreen that is SPF 15 or higher.

- **Encourage workers to ensure use a “buddy system” while working**
 - Ensure adequate water consumption.
 - Alternate work load between strenuous and light tasks.
 - Detect early signs of heat-related illnesses.

Heat-Related Illnesses

- **Heat stroke is a life-threatening situation!**
 - Occurs when the body is unable to regulate its temperature and cool itself.
 - **Signs:** extremely high body temperature (above 103°F)
 - red, hot, and dry skin (no sweating)
 - rapid, strong pulse
 - throbbing headache
 - dizziness
 - nausea
 - confusion
 - unconsciousness
 - **If you see any of these signs, get medical assistance immediately!**
- **Heat exhaustion.**
 - A milder form of heat-related illness that can develop after several days of exposure to high temperatures and inadequate or unbalanced replacement of fluids.
 - Signs: cool, moist, pale or flushed skin • heavy sweating • headache • nausea • dizziness • weakness
 - Cool the victim by providing cool, nonalcoholic beverages • rest in a cool or air-conditioned environment • cool shower, bath, or sponge bath • lightweight clothing
 - If the person vomits or begins to lose consciousness, get medical assistance immediately!
- **Heat cramps.**
 - Muscle pains or spasms (usually in the legs or abdomen) that occur in association with loss of fluids and electrolytes following strenuous activity.
 - Often an early sign that the body is having trouble with heat.
- **Sunburn.**
 - Damage to the skin that significantly slows the skin's ability to release heat.
 - Usually minor discomfort that heals in a week.
 - Severe sunburn may require medical attention.
- **Heat rash.**
 - Skin irritation caused by excessive sweating during hot, humid weather.
 - Red cluster of pimples or small blisters.
 - Most common on the neck, upper chest, or folds of the skin (e.g., elbow creases).

Development of this educational material was by the Center for Food Security and Public Health with funding from the Multi-State Partnership for Security in Agriculture MOU-2010-HSEMD-004. June 2010.

