

Heat Stress? There's an App for That!



It's June, which means hot and humid weather is on the horizon. So if your workers work outside, they're vulnerable to heat stress in the summer weather.

Protecting workers from heat stress requires knowing the heat index, which is based on both the air temperature and humidity levels. So how can workers and their supervisors get this information in the field? By using OSHA's free app.

The OSHA Heat Safety Tool, which is available for both Android phones and iPhones, lets workers and supervisors calculate the heat index for their worksite and, based on that index, displays a risk level. Then a simple 'click' provides reminders about the protective measures that should be taken at that risk level to protect workers from heat-related illness, such as:

- Drinking enough fluids
- Scheduling rest breaks
- Planning for and knowing what to do in an emergency
- Adjusting work operations
- Gradually building up the workload for new workers
- Training on heat illness signs and symptoms
- Monitoring each other for signs and symptoms of heat-related illness.

The app automatically provides the current conditions and maximum heat at your location and can accept manual input if users don't have cell service, which is very useful for remote worksites. (Note that the temperature used is in Fahrenheit.)

As the app was designed by OSHA, the guidance provided is tailored to US workplace safety laws. But because there's considerable overlap between the US and Canadian requirements as to heat stress, the app and its advice may still be helpful in Canadian workplaces.

For more tips, tools, information and other resources on protecting workers from heat stress, visit the OHS Insider's Heat Stress Compliance Centre, including:

- A recorded webinar on the importance of acclimatization and protecting workers from heat stress
- A heat stress self-audit checklist