

# Use PPE to Protect Your Workers from Heat Stress



It was dangerously hot this week. And summer is just getting started. One of the most important things you can do to [protect your workers against heat stress](#) is to supply and ensure they [use proper PPE](#), including:

1. **Reflective clothing** like aprons, suits and jackets that stops the skin from absorbing radiant heat. Downside: Reflective clothing typically doesn't allow air exchange through the garment.
2. **Ice vests** filled with water or dry ice, which are relatively inexpensive and readily available. Downside: The cooling effects of vests lasts only a couple of hours at moderate to heavy heat.
3. **Wetted clothing**, which involves not just dumping water over normal clothing but use of specially designed clothing like wetted terry cloth overalls or whole-body cotton suits. Downside: Wetted clothing is best suited for high temperatures when humidity is low, where evaporation from the garment isn't restricted.
4. **Water-cooled garments** ranging from hoods that cool just the head to long johns that cool the whole body. Downside: These garments typically require use of a battery-driven circulating pump, liquid ice coolant and container, which can weigh workers down and reduce mobility.
5. **Circulating air systems** that direct compressed air from a supplied air system around the body are the most

effective personal cooling system, especially when used with impermeable garments or double cotton. Downside: They're complicated to use, noisy and require a constant source of compressed air supplied through an attached air hose.