

# Working in Hot Conditions

## YOURSAFETY@IRP - TOOLBOX DISCUSSION

### What can happen to you when working in hot conditions?

Exposure to the sun and heat can have a number of negative effects on your health. These include:

#### Heat illness

This covers a range of medical conditions that can arise when your body is unable to cope with working in hot or humid environments. These conditions include:

- Heat stroke - a life threatening condition that requires immediate first aid and medical attention;
- Fainting, heat exhaustion, heat cramps, heat fatigue, rashes (also called 'prickly heat');
- Worsening of a pre-existing illnesses and conditions.

Signs and symptoms of heat illness include feeling nauseous, dizzy, weak or generally unwell. Slurred speech, blurred vision, difficulty thinking clearly, clumsiness and convulsions can also be the result of heat illness. **If you experience any of these signs or symptoms you MUST report it immediately to a supervisor/manager and seek urgent medical attention!**

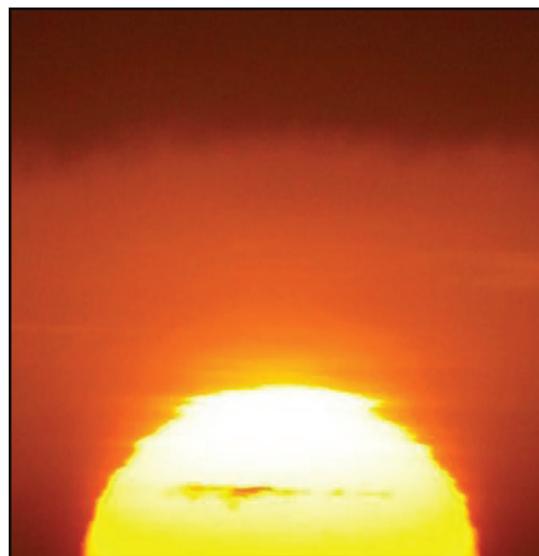
#### Skin and eye damage

Australia has the highest skin cancer rates in the world and 68% of those who die each year are males. This can be attributed to frequent sunny weather and a large population with fair skin. Skin can burn in as little as 15 minutes and 90% of UV radiation can penetrate cloud cover. Sun exposure can also cause eye damage such as excessive blinking, eye swelling, cataracts, pterygiums (eye growths) and eye melanomas.

#### Identifying heat and sun exposure hazards

Air temperature alone cannot be used to determine whether there is a risk. The key risk factors that need to be taken into account are: Time of day, humidity, radiant heat, air movement or wind speed, duration of work, type of work, your physical fitness, access to appropriate clothing/PPE.

**Talk to your site supervisor or your IRP consultant if you have any questions about *Safely Working in Hot Conditions* – 9477 7999**



### What do I need to do in hot/humid conditions?

- Drink water regularly throughout the day, check your urine colour – the clearer the better;
- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) ;
- If working outdoors - Wear a wide brim hat, loose fitting long sleeved collared shirt and long loose fitting pants, wrap around sunglasses, and broad spectrum SPF 30+ sunscreen;
- Take regular rest periods in cool and shaded areas;
- Know how to recognise heat-related illness and who your first aiders are;
- Check your skin regularly (at least once a month if frequently working outdoors).