



Heat Safety for **Outdoor Maintenance Employees**

Stay Hydrated. Stay Alert. Stay Safe.

Working outdoors during hot weather increases the risk of heat-related illness, especially during prolonged exposure or strenuous activity. Heat illness can develop quickly — but with the right precautions, it is largely preventable.

Use these best practices to help protect yourself and your coworkers throughout the summer months.

Stay Hydrated

Proper hydration is your first defense against heat stress.

- + Drink water frequently throughout your shift, even if you don't feel thirsty.
- + Take small, frequent drinks rather than waiting until you're dehydrated.
- + Limit excessive caffeine, sugary beverages, and energy drinks, which can contribute to dehydration.
- + For long shifts in extreme heat, consider beverages that help replenish electrolytes.

Take Regular Breaks

Your body needs time to cool down.

- + Take breaks in shaded or air-conditioned areas whenever possible.
- + Increase the frequency of breaks during periods of high heat and humidity.
- + Schedule the most physically demanding work during the cooler parts of the day whenever feasible.

Dress for the Heat

Proper clothing can help reduce heat stress.

- + Wear lightweight, light-colored, breathable clothing.
- + Use a wide-brimmed hat or other sun protection.
- + Apply sunscreen regularly to exposed skin.
- + Wear sunglasses to protect your eyes from UV exposure.





Know the Signs of Heat Illness

HEAT EXHAUSTION

Watch for:

- + Heavy sweating
- + Headache
- + Dizziness
- + Weakness or fatigue
- + Muscle cramps
- + Nausea

If recognized early, heat exhaustion can usually be treated before it becomes more serious.

HEAT STROKE (MEDICAL EMERGENCY)

Heat stroke requires immediate medical attention.

Warning signs include:

- + Confusion or altered mental status
- + Loss of consciousness
- + Hot, dry skin or excessive sweating
- + High body temperature
- + Seizures or inability to respond

Call 911 immediately if heat stroke is suspected.

Look Out for Each Other

Heat illness often develops before employees recognize their own symptoms.

- + Work in pairs or maintain regular contact with coworkers.
- + Watch for signs of heat stress in others.
- + Report symptoms immediately to a supervisor.
- + Never ignore someone who appears confused or disoriented.

If Symptoms Occur

If you or a coworker begins experiencing symptoms of heat illness:

- + Move to a shaded or air-conditioned area immediately.
- + Drink cool water if the person is alert and able to swallow safely.
- + Loosen or remove excess clothing.
- + Cool the body with wet towels, fans, or ice packs placed on the neck, armpits, and groin.
- + Call emergency medical services immediately if symptoms worsen or heat stroke is suspected.

Key Takeaway

Working outdoors in the heat requires extra attention to hydration, rest, and recognizing early warning signs. By taking simple precautions and looking out for one another, maintenance teams can reduce the risk of heat-related illness and stay safe all summer long.

RISK CONTROL TIP

Heat illness is preventable. Staying hydrated, taking regular cooling breaks, and recognizing symptoms early are the most effective ways to prevent serious injuries during hot weather.

