

# Written Heat Stress and Attic Safety Plan

## Section 1: Objective

The objective of this policy is to reduce the risk of illness, injury, or fatality to employees from heat related disorders. This also includes working in hot environments like attics.

This plan has been developed to establish guidelines for safe work in hot environments in accordance with OSHA regulations found in the General Duty Clause section 5(a)(1) of CFR 29. Unless otherwise instructed by your supervisor, this is the Heat Stress and Attic Safety Plan you must follow.

## Section 2: Assignment of Responsibility

### The Plan Administrator

- The Plan Administrator will monitor all activities related to this program.
- The Plan Administrator is responsible to identify which safety equipment the company utilizes.
- The Plan Administrator is responsible to periodically inspect to ensure regular access to water and/or other electrolyte replacement drinks are available.
- The Plan Administrator is responsible to review this program annually and make changes as needed.
- The Plan Administrator is responsible to ensure all employee training applicable to this program is completed.

### Supervisors

- Supervisors are responsible to implement this program in their departments.
- Must allow for acclimatization of workers in hot environments, adoption of work rest regimes and scheduling of work to reduce heat stresses as appropriate and providing training for employees.
- Ensure regular access to water and/or other electrolyte replacement drinks are available.
- Supervisors are responsible to monitor employee activities as related to this program and correct actions that are unsafe or in violation of this program.

### Employees

- Employees are responsible to use these procedures in the field and stay hydrated.
- Employees are responsible for attending training and following the instructions given.
- They are also responsible for monitoring themselves for signs and symptoms of heat stress.

## **Section 3 – Required Training**

All Plan Administrators, Supervisors, and Employees must complete an approved training program on Heat Stress and Attic Safety. The training program must include a test at the end to ensure participants gained the required knowledge to safely work in hot environments.

Employees should be trained prior to working in a high heat area to be aware of the hazards of working in the heat, how to recognize heat-related illnesses and procedures for first aid and medical attention. They should also be aware of the methods used to avoid heat-related illnesses, including how some non-work activities can increase the risk of heat illnesses at work.

## **Section 4 – General Policies and Procedures**

Many employees work in hot environments. Working in hot conditions poses many safety and health hazards to the workers. This policy addresses ways to minimize and control these hazards.

Four environmental factors affect the amount of stress a worker experiences in a hot environment: temperature, humidity, air velocity and radiant heat. Examples of radiant heat include direct heat from the sun or a furnace. Job-related factors that affect heat stress include work rate and physical effort required, type of clothing and protective equipment used, and duration of activity. All these factors need to be evaluated to minimize their impact on the worker. Personal characteristics such as age, weight, physical fitness, and acclimatization to the heat also need to be factored in to determine those people and areas at high risk.

Fluids, such as water or electrolyte replacement drinks, i.e., Gatorade, need to be conveniently available to workers so they can drink about 8 oz. of liquids every 20 minutes to maintain hydration in hot environments.

## **Section 5 – Workplace Surveillance**

Work being done in non-air-conditioned indoor spaces should be monitored to assess the heat illness risk of the job. Employees identified as working in a high-risk area will need to be trained to follow the guidelines in section entitled Control of Heat Stress. Employees who are working outdoors or in non-air-conditioned space should pay attention to the temperature and humidity. When high temperatures and humidity become extreme, steps found in the Control of Heat Stress section should be followed.

If the heat and humidity exceed 120 F work in a heat stress environment should stop. If it is imperative that work gets done, a supervisor should plan to communicate with the worker directly before, during and after the job is conducted. The worker should call the supervisor before entering the work area and at regular 15-minute intervals during the work time. If an employee does not communicate regularly, the supervisor should attempt to call the employee. If there is no answer, the supervisor should call the customer for an update. If unable to reach either the employee or customer, the supervisor should call 911.

## **Section 6 – Monitoring Yourself and Coworkers**

Always monitor signs and symptoms of heat-stressed workers. Discontinue any activity for a person when:

- Sustained heart rate greater than 160 beats per minute for those under 35 and 140 for those 35 and over.
- There are complaints of sudden and severe fatigue, nausea, dizziness, lightheadedness, or fainting.
- There are periods of inexplicable irritability, malaise or flu-like symptoms.
- Sweating stops and the skin becomes hot and dry.

## **Section 7– Acclimatization**

Employees must adapt to new temperatures. This adaptation period is usually 5 days. New employees and employees returning from an absence of two weeks or more should have a 3–5-day period of acclimatization. This period should begin with 50% of the normal workload the first day and gradually build up to 100% on the last day.

## **Section 8 – Weather Conditions and Rest Cycles**

Check weather conditions frequently during the day and adjust the work schedule. It might be appropriate to change the actual hours of work to minimize working during the heat of the summer months. Heavy work should be scheduled for the cooler hours of the day. Non-essential tasks should be postponed when there is a heat warning issued.

Heavy and minimal work activities should be alternated. Employees should be allowed sufficient breaks in a cool area to avoid heat strain and promote recovery. Shade or an air-conditioned break room should be provided.

## **Section 9 – PPE**

During work in hot environments, workers should use the lightest weight or “breathable” protective garments that give adequate protection. For work in extremely hot environments, cooling vests are available from several manufacturers. These vests typically provide 1-2 hours of cooling, recharge in 20 minutes, and maintain a constant temperature of 55 F.

## **Section – Attic Heat Safety**

Attics present unique issues. The limited access of the attic means if an emergency happens someone may not be able to help or may not even realize there is an issue in the first place. Attics can also be well over 120°F in the afternoon during summer months.

The same heat safety requirements as stated above apply. If possible, schedule the work for when the attic is cooler such as first thing in the morning. If not possible, stay hydrated and spend no more than 15 minutes at a time in the attic. Rest and hydrate between trips into the hot attic. Let your supervisor know when you enter an attic and exit the attic. They should call the customer if you don't respond or call 911 if the customer doesn't respond.