



Toolbox talk: Heat in the workplace

Working in the sun

Too much sunlight is harmful to your skin. It can cause skin damage including sunburn, blistering and skin ageing and in the long term can lead to an increased risk of skin cancer. Skin cancer is one of the most common forms of cancer in the UK with over 50,000 new cases every year.

A tan is a sign that the skin has been damaged. The damage is caused by ultraviolet (UV) rays in sunlight.

When the sun is strong, spend time in the shade, cover up with clothing and use sunscreen with at least SPF15 and 4 stars.

Who is at risk?

If work keeps you outdoors for a long time your skin could be exposed to more sun than is healthy for you. You should take particular care if you have:

- fair or freckled skin that doesn't tan, or goes red or burns before it tans
- red or fair hair and light-coloured eyes
- a large number of moles

Keep Hydrated

Working in a hot environment causes sweating which helps keep people cool but means losing vital water that must be replaced. Please drink cool water in frequently small amounts before, during (where possible) and after working.

This also applies to working in hot environments, so keep hydrated and try to schedule work so that you can work away from the heat source at times.



Sunburn - what to look for:

- Reddened skin
- Pain in the area of the burn
- Blistering

Treatment | [More info here](#)

- **Cover** – put on lightweight clothing and move out of the sun
- **Cool** – sponge the skin gently with cool water
- **Calm** – if the skin is not blistered apply calamine lotion or after sun

Dehydration

Dehydration occurs when someone loses fluid from the body and does not replace it. If untreated, someone with dehydration can develop heat exhaustion.

What to look for:

1. They may complain of a headache or light-headedness
2. They may be dizzy or confused.
3. They may have a dry mouth and dry eyes
4. They may have dry or cracked lips
5. They may produce reduced amounts of dark urine
6. They may complain of muscle cramps, such as to the calves
7. Special attention should be paid to babies and young children as they may also have pale skin with sunken eyes and can deteriorate very quickly

How to treat dehydration:

1. Help them sit down
2. Give them water to drink; oral rehydration solutions can also help.
3. Advise them to rest and stretch if they have cramp.
4. If they are unwell, seek medical advice.

Heat exhaustion

Long periods in the sun can take its toll and can lead to heat exhaustion. Heat exhaustion is caused by a loss of salt and water from the body, usually through excessive sweating. It develops slowly and usually happens to people who aren't used to hot, humid weather. If you're at a festival and it's very hot, it's easy to suffer from heat exhaustion.

How to spot heat exhaustion:

1. They may suffer from a headache, dizziness and confusion
2. They may suffer from a loss of appetite and feeling sick
3. They may sweat with pale, clammy skin
4. They may have cramps in the arms, legs and stomach
5. They may have a fast, weakening pulse and breathing

How to treat heat exhaustion:

1. Help them to lie down out of the sun and raise their legs
2. Give them lots of water to drink. Oral rehydration solutions or an isotonic drink will help with the loss of salt
3. Monitor their level of response and suggest they seek medical advice.
4. Call 999/112 if you are concerned.



Heatstroke

Heatstroke is even more serious than heat exhaustion, and can be life-threatening.

What to look for:

- 1. They may complain of headache, dizziness and discomfort
- 2. They may be restless and confused
- 3. Their skin may be hot, flushed and dry
- 4. They may become less responsive quickly
- 5. Their pulse may be full and bounding
- 6. Their body temperature is above 40°C (104°F)

How to treat heatstroke:

- 1. Immediately move them to a cool place and call 999/112
 - Remove outer layers of clothing
- 2. Sit them down and wrap them in a cool, wet sheet
 - Pour cold water over the sheet
 - Reduce their temperature to 37.5°C
- 3. Replace the wet sheet with a dry sheet
- 4. Monitor their level of response and temperature

Sunburn

Whether you're out in the park, or relaxing on the beach, it's important to avoid too much exposure to the sun by covering up with clothing, staying in the shade and applying high factor sunscreen.

What to look for:

- 1. They may have reddened skin
- 2. They may have pain in the area of the burn
- 3. Later, blistering may appear

How to treat sunburn

- 1. Cover the skin with light clothing and move out of the sun
- 2. Drink sips of water
- 3. Cool the skin by sponging with cold water
- 4. Apply calamine or after sun lotion to mild sunburn. If there are blisters, seek medical advice

Sign off Sheet: Heat in the workplace

Name	Signed & Dated	Name	Signed & Dated

BY SIGNING THE ABOVE, I ACCEPT THAT I UNDERSTAND WHAT IS REQUIRED OF ME AND I AGREE TO COMPLY.