

Working in Hot Conditions

o prevent heat-related illnesses, follow the guidelines below when working in temperatures above 75 degrees:

- Check the weather prediction for temperature, humidity, and heat index.
- As these factors increase, plan to decrease work level, increase breaks, and increase fluid intake.
- Drink a minimum 8 ounces (1 cup) of liquid about every 15 to 30 minutes. (Note: Do not wait until you are thirsty to drink!)
- Liquids should include electrolyte to avoid flushing your body of critical salts.
- Avoid caffeine, alcohol, drugs, and large amounts of sugar because they can speed up the dehydration process.
- Wear lightweight, loose clothing and light colors that reflect sunlight.
- Save strenuous work for the cool times of the day such as early morning or evening.
- Be especially careful with those tasks that require personal protective equipment. Take more frequent breaks and drink more liquids.
- Pace yourself and take 15-minute breaks in the shade or air-conditioned cab at a minimum every two hours (Figure 1). This is a *minimum*. Hot conditions with PPE may require breaks every 10 to 15 minutes.
- Gradually adjust to working in the heat.
- Check your prescription and over-the-counter medication to determine if there are side effects when exposed to heat.
- Talk to your physician if you have a chronic health condition to obtain any special recommendations for working in hot and humid environments.
- Designate a "spotter," someone you inform of your work conditions and location, to check in with you at regular intervals.

Written by
Sam Polly, Extension Specialist, Plant Science and Technology

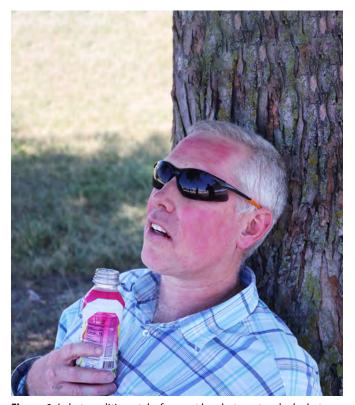


Figure 1. In hot conditions, take frequent breaks to rest and rehydrate.

- Change work schedules and routines as possible if the heat index may exceed 100°F or temperatures reach the mid-90s.
- Review resources outlining symptoms and first aid for the forms of heat illness.

Resources

Heat Illness and Agriculture, Penn State
(extension.psu.edu/heat-illness-and-agriculture)

Heat Stress Guide, U.S. Department of Labor
(osha.gov/emergency-preparedness/guides/heat-stress)

Heat Stress — Heat Related Illness, Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention (cdc.gov/niosh/topics/heatstress/heatrelillness.html)



Issued in furtherance of the Cooperative Extension Work Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Director, Cooperative Extension, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO 65211 • MU Extension provides equal opportunity to all participants in extension programs and activities and for all employees and applicants for employment on the basis of their demonstrated ability and competence without discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, genetic information, disability or protected veteran status. • 573-882-7216 • extension.missouri.edu