

10 Tips to Help Workers Stay Cool in the Heat of the Summer

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WILMINGTON, Mass., May 16, 2018 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Warm weather is a most welcome sign of summer, especially in regions that have experienced a harsh winter. However, workers who are exposed to rising temperatures on the job, outdoors, or in hot indoor environments are at risk for several heat-related illnesses, ranging from heat rash and heat cramps to heat exhaustion and heatstroke.

When a person works in a hot environment, the body must get rid of excess heat to maintain a stable internal temperature. If it cannot, it will store the heat, the body's core temperature rises, and the heart rate increases. This can lead to loss of concentration, difficulty focusing, irritability, nausea, fainting, and even death if the person is not cooled down.

According to data provided by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), every year thousands of workers in the U.S. become sick from occupational heat exposure, and according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), approximately 618 people die. These illnesses and deaths can often be prevented by putting the right types of safeguards in place.

Dressing properly, including selecting garments with built-in moisture management technology and breathability, is one of the easiest and best ways for businesses to help protect their workers from heat-related illnesses. "Advanced fabrics that wick moisture away from the skin and help keep workers cool, dry, and comfortable all day are great options," says Adam Soreff, director of marketing and communications at UniFirst Corporation (NYSE:UNF), a North American leader in providing businesses with customized work uniform programs, corporate attire, and facility service products. "Innovations such as poly/cotton mesh knits, lightweight fabrics, and workwear designed with built-in ventilation panels are also great choices for working in warm weather. A customized work uniform program is a smart solution for businesses who want to outfit workers with the right types of garments that will provide optimal protection from the potential health risks associated with working in the heat."

Here are 10 tips for businesses to consider, many of which are endorsed by OSHA, to help keep workers safe from rising temperatures and other seasonal conditions.

1. **Wear loose fitting clothing.** Flowing garments allow air circulation close to the body, which helps keep the body cool and dry.
2. **Select clothing with fabrics that are lightweight and moisture wicking.** Look for clothing, such as 100-percent spun polyester, that is quick-drying with built-in moisture management technology for maximum breathability and comfort.
3. **Choose clothing with built-in ventilation.** Clothing constructed with lightweight, mesh fabric offers superior breathability and comfort.
4. **Wear light-colored clothing.** Dark colors absorb heat. Wearing light-colored garments help reflect light and heat, and will help maintain a normal body temperature.
5. **Cover as much skin as possible.** When outdoors, workers should wear long sleeves and pants constructed of lightweight fabric and loose-fitting designs to help protect the skin against permanent damage from the sun, while providing breathability and air flow.
6. **Wear a well-vented hat.** Since the head quickly absorbs heat, wearing a hat with ventilation will create a barrier from the sun, protecting the head, face, and neck.
7. **Protect the eyes.** Wearing sunglasses when working outdoors will help reduce glare on the eyes and protect them from the sun's damaging rays.
8. **Look for protective garments that are breathable.** At-risk workers who must wear protective garments that can often be heavy and constricting, should seek out garments that combine the highest level of protection with light-weight fabrics to help keep workers cool and comfortable.
9. **Don't forget the sunscreen.** Pay attention to any exposed skin that is not covered by work clothing, such as hands, neck, and ears. Use a broad-spectrum sunscreen on these areas to protect against both UVA and UVB rays.
10. **Take plenty of breaks and stay hydrated.** It's important that workers take regular breaks and drink plenty of fluids while doing their job in extreme heat, especially outdoors.

Although working in warm weather poses many challenges, following these tips and participating in a managed employee uniform program can help businesses protect their workers against heat-related illnesses so they are able to stay safe and productive on the job.



A managed uniform rental program can take the worry out of properly dressing workers to help protect them against the dangers of extreme heat.

About UniFirst:

Headquartered in Wilmington, Mass., UniFirst Corporation (NYSE:UNF) is a North American leader in the supply and servicing of uniform and workwear programs, as well as the delivery of facility service programs. Together with its subsidiaries, the company also provides first aid and safety products, and manages specialized garment programs for the cleanroom and nuclear industries. UniFirst manufactures its own branded workwear, protective clothing, and floorcare products, and with 250 service locations, over 300,000 customer locations, and 14,000 employee Team Partners, the company outfits nearly 2 million workers each business day. For more information, contact UniFirst at 800.455.7654 or visit UniFirst.com.

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