

Safety FOCUSED

June 2014

Summer Precautions for Working Outdoors

Follow these tips to protect your workers from the sun this summer.

Keeping Hydrated in the Heat

Remember to stay hydrated as summer heats up.

A monthly safety newsletter from
Crendon Insurance Brokers Ltd

Summer Precautions for Working Outdoors

If you work outdoors, it is important to take precautions against exposure to sun, heat and insect bites during the summer months.

Sun

Skin cancer is the fifth-most common cancer in the United Kingdom, and outdoor workers are at a particularly high risk due to their prolonged sun exposure.

Because various detrimental effects of sun exposure occur later in life, many workers do not take necessary precautions to protect themselves during their younger years. To protect against the sun's harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays:

- Cover up. Wear lightweight, tightly woven clothing that you cannot see through.
- Use sunscreen. A sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15 blocks 93 per cent of UV rays. Be sure to follow application directions.
- Wear a hat. It should protect your neck, ears, forehead, nose and scalp.
- Wear UV-absorbent shades. Sunglasses should block 99 to 100 per cent of UVA and UVB radiation. Before you buy, read the product label.

Ticks

When working in tall grass or wooded areas, the following precautions will protect you from ticks:

- Wear a hat and light-coloured clothing to spot ticks more easily.
- Apply tick repellents.
- Wear long sleeves and long trousers, and tuck trouser legs into socks or boots.
- Cover your feet with boots or closed shoes.
- Wash your clothes at high temperatures.

Examine your body for ticks after work and remove any attached ticks with a tweezers. In some regions, ticks transmit Lyme disease. If you are bitten and develop a rash, see your doctor.

Insect Bites and Stings

Bee, wasp and hornet stings are typically dangerous only to those who are allergic or who have been stung multiple times. These tips will help deter insect bites and stings:

- Apply insect repellent and avoid wearing heavy perfumes or scented lotions.
- Check before drinking from cups, bottles or cans. Stinging insects are attracted to sweet drinks.

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**Crendon
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Keeping Hydrated in the Heat

Dehydration happens when you lose more water than you ingest. Staying hydrated is important to keep all your body functions running smoothly. When you work outdoors, take these precautions to stay hydrated as summer heats up.

Water Loss

Adults can lose almost 2.5 litres of water a day simply by sweating, breathing and going to the toilet. Electrolytes are also lost. These minerals, which include sodium, potassium and calcium, maintain the balance of fluids in the body.

Symptoms

When you are dehydrated, you experience one or more of the following symptoms:

- Excessive thirst
- Sleepiness or tiredness
- Dry mouth
- Muscle weakness
- Headache, dizziness or light-headedness

Preventing Dehydration

The best defence against dehydration is prevention. That sounds easy enough—consume lots of fluids and foods high in water, such as fruits and vegetables—but the question of how much fluid can be complex.

Unfortunately, determining appropriate water intake is not an exact science, especially because so much depends on age, physical condition, activity level, location and body chemistry. The best overall approach is to make a conscious effort to stay hydrated. In hot weather, skip coffee or fizzy drinks, and make water your beverage of choice.

Pace Yourself

Exertion is part of life, especially when working outdoors, but you need to take care of yourself. Take frequent water breaks. Adjust your water intake to match your activity level and working conditions to stay healthy and alert. If you begin to feel symptoms of dehydration, do not ignore them. Crendon Insurance Brokers Ltd is committed to the health of its employees.



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The European Food Safety Authority recommends that women should drink about 2 litres of fluid and men should drink about 2.5 litres of fluid per day.

That makes 10 200-mL glasses for women and about 13 200-mL glasses for men.



Real-life Case Study

On his way to work one morning, an agriculture worker in Essex realised he had left his wide-brimmed hat and water bottle at home. He did not check the temperature for the day, which was going to be hovering at around 37° C.

At about noon he started to experience a pounding headache, extreme tiredness and slight nausea. Thinking it was just a symptom of not eating enough for breakfast that morning, he ignored his symptoms until he became light-headed and his vision was blurry.

Finally, he mentioned the concern to his supervisor, who moved him inside immediately, noticing he was showing signs of dehydration from heat exhaustion. Another employee helped him by placing cold compresses on his body and giving him small amounts of water every 15 minutes. His supervisor instructed him to take the afternoon off to rest and rehydrate himself.

The worker's supervisor realised the worker was experiencing the early signs of heat exhaustion and removed him from the extreme heat just in time.