

Preventive Measures to Minimise Risk of Heat Stress.



Working in Singapore's hot and humid weather can put your workers at an increased risk of heat stress.

The highest mean annual temperature of 28.4 °C was recorded in Singapore in 2016 with April being the warmest month when daily maximum temperatures exceeded 34 °C on most days. With on-going global warming, new record temperatures are increasingly likely. In 2016, there was an increase in both warm days and nights. Due to more extreme temperatures and change in weather patterns, it is important to monitor and plan work accordingly to ensure the health and safety of workers.

On 18 May 2017, around 4pm, a worker developed heat stroke while carrying out formwork assembly at a construction site. His colleagues noticed that he appeared unsteady and he was subsequently sent to the hospital. He was working in Singapore for the past two years and had felt unwell two days prior to the incident.

Heat-related illnesses are preventable. Companies should implement appropriate preventive measures to reduce the risk of exposure to heat stress. Newly assigned workers, especially those who come from a colder climate, must be acclimatised to the hot weather. Companies should instruct their workers to report to their supervisor immediately if they are feeling unwell and be seen by a doctor.

Recommendations and preventive measure can be taken to minimise the risk of heat stress at work:

Risk Management

- Ensure that workers are acclimatised to hot weather and/or hot working conditions;
- Implement emergency measures to manage workers with symptoms of heat-related disorders;

Control Measures

- Provide cool drinking water at accessible locations and encourage workers to keep hydrated by quenching their thirst frequently;
- Provide shaded areas for work and rest away from the sun where possible;
- Schedule strenuous work and/or work under direct sun to cooler periods of the day;
- Reduce physical load where possible by providing mechanical aids;
- Schedule alternate work and rest periods for workers under hot conditions;

Training

- Educate workers on the risk of working in hot conditions and to recognise symptoms of heat-related disorders;
- Instruct all workers who are feeling unwell (e.g., fever, vomiting or diarrhoea) to report to their supervisor immediately and be seen by a doctor.
- Encourage workers to wear loose-fitting and light coloured clothing where possible;



Workers should be provided with shaded rest areas.



Provide cool drinking water at accessible locations.

For more resources on the preventive measures to prevent risk of heat stress, click [here](#).

**Written by the Ministry of Manpower*