

Some jobs at UVic involve greater physical activity, heavier protective clothing or outdoor work during periods of elevated temperatures. Units should have procedures in place to prevent heat stress to employees engaged in activities where the environmental conditions present a higher risk of heat exposure.

Heat Stress – Control Measures

Preventing heat stress should include an assessment of the working environment and job tasks, and implementing control measures that include the following considerations:

- Drink at least one cup of water every 20 to 30 minutes, even if you don't feel thirsty.
- Use mechanical aids for manual lifting where possible (e.g. dollies, carts, etc.)
- Use cooling fans where possible.
- Schedule in advance appropriate work/rest cycles. Take breaks as needed and decrease your pace of work. If you feel tired, weak, or dizzy, take a break.
- Reschedule outdoor and hardest physical tasks for the coolest part of the day; relocate work away from direct sunlight or radiant heat sources whenever possible; rotate work activities or use additional workers to reduce heat exposure for each person.
- Heat stress can increase when physical work is done at temperatures above 31 degrees. Don't push yourself beyond your limits.
- Wear sunscreen and a hat if working outside.
- If you experience any symptoms of heat stress, respond by taking a break and drinking water. Notify your supervisor immediately of your symptoms.

Heat Stress – Symptoms and Response

Heat stress symptoms are a set of natural signals telling you that something needs to be done to balance your body's heating and cooling. As your body heats up, it tries to rid itself of excess heat through the evaporation of sweat. If it is unable to cool itself this way, your body temperature will increase. The causes, symptoms, and treatment of various heat-related symptoms and illnesses are listed in the following table.



Problems & symptoms	Treatment	Prevention
<i>Heat rash (prickly heat)</i> Tingling and burning of the skin, red itchy rash. Sweat glands plugged due to prolonged exposure of skin to heat, humidity, sweat.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ move to a cooler environment▪ thorough drying▪ cool showers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ keep the skin as dry as possible▪ rest in a cool place▪ shower often▪ change clothes frequently▪ keep skin clean
<i>Heat cramps</i> Painful spasms of muscles that do the hardest work (arms, legs, and abdomen).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ move to a cooler environment▪ massage the muscles▪ eat salt containing foods (unless to be avoided for medical reasons)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ warm up muscles before heavy work▪ take rest breaks▪ eat a normal, healthy diet
<i>Feeling faint/light-headed</i> Increased flow of blood to the skin to get rid of excess heat can result in less blood to the brain.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ lie down in a cooler environment▪ drink cool fluids to lower body temperature	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ drink plenty of fluids at regular intervals▪ avoid standing still in one position - move around
<i>Heat exhaustion</i> Tired, weak, dizzy, clammy skin, slow weak pulse. Pale or flushed skin colour. Higher than normal heart rate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ move to a cooler environment▪ lie down with knees raised▪ drink cool - not cold fluids	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ take 4-7 days to adjust (acclimatize) to the heat▪ drink plenty of fluids at regular intervals▪ take rest breaks in a cool place
<i>Heat stroke</i> Person usually stops sweating, body core temperature is high (40-43 degrees celsius), skin is hot and dry. Person experiences headache, dizziness, confusion, may lose consciousness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ this is a medical emergency - call 911 first to summon an ambulance, and then contact Campus Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ all measures shown above

Sometimes people don't notice their own heat stress symptoms. If you observe that an employee is starting to display symptoms, take them to a cool place and arrange for first aid by immediately calling Campus Security at 250-721-7599.

In any circumstance or onset of symptoms where the individual needs medical attention, call 911 first and then contact Campus Security.