Complete Guide on How to Protect Workers in a Hot Environment

- Make workers aware about the dangers of working in a hot environment.
- Educate workers to know how to spot signs of heat-related illnesses.
- Keep workers aware of weather and work conditions with increased risk.
- Provide cool beverages and advise workers to avoid dehydration by drinking lots of fluids during their shift.
- Educate workers about the possible effects of medications and comorbid diseases when exposed to heat for long periods of time.
- Start small but gradually increase the time of exposure to heat over several days to slowly acclimatize workers to the hot environment.
- Let workers work in pairs or groups (buddy system).
- As much as possible, schedule work on the coolest part of the day.
- Regularly monitor weather conditions. High humidity or poor air quality may increase the risk of working outside. If the conditions are hazardous, it’s best to cancel non-essential work such as repairs and maintenance.
- Make sure workers have proper, air-conditioned shelters to stay in during breaks.
- Assign workers with health conditions or medications to duties that minimize risk of heat-induced diseases.
- Ensure your workers have a means of communication during emergency situations.
- Provide enough shade to cover the worksite to minimize prolonged exposure to direct or reflected sunlight.
- Allow workers to do work at their own pace. Be sure workers take regular breaks to cool off.
- Stress the importance of protecting the skin from heat. Advice them to wear proper clothes and sunblock.
- Provide a sweat barrier for those operating critical machinery to prevent sweat from getting into their eyes or affect their hands.
- Provide workers with head covering.
- Advise workers to avoid wearing semi-permeable or impermeable clothing to reduce the risk of heat stress.
- Encourage workers to wear lightweight and light-colored clothes because these garments and fabrics don’t trap heat.
- Monitor workers at all times and watch out for signs of heat stress, exhaustion, or excessive fatigue.