

OVERVIEW OF INFORMATION

- According to the Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA), the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the U.S. Department of Health, and the University of Michigan, employees required to work in high temperature environments should be allowed to take frequent breaks in a cool place.
- “High Temperature Environments” are generally referred to as those over 87°F for light work, over 82°F for moderate work and over 78°F for heavy work (this amount requires 25% rest time for every 75% of work time, according to OSHA, with additional rest times for higher temperature environments. For example, work place temperatures over 86°F require 75% rest time for every 25% of work time when a worker is producing a heavy workload.)
- According to OSHA “rest period” recommendations, if a staff of 100 workers takes ONE additional 10-MINUTE REST PERIOD PER DAY, the cost to the company will be 16 hours and 40 minutes in lost production time per day or 83 hours and 20 minutes per week. In terms of dollars, at \$18 per hour pay rate, excluding overtime and including benefits, the cost to the company will be \$1,500 per week or \$19,500 over the course of a 13-week summer. That is for ONE 10-MINUTE REST PERIOD PER DAY PER 100 WORKERS!
- According to these same organizations, high temperature work environments can lead to a variety of heat-illnesses including: heat stroke, heat stress, heat strain, heat collapse, heat cramps, heat exhaustion, heat fatigue and heat rashes
- Also according to these groups, if frequent breaks are not taken, workers are at risk of physical symptoms such as nausea, headaches, dizziness, cramps, confusion, unconsciousness, seizure and even death. Mentally, workers can become drowsy, unfocused, moody, and the effects of heat stress have been shown to contribute to accidents, work slowdowns and walk-outs, according to the Southwest Michigan Coalition on Safety and Health.
- All these groups recommend ventilation as a preventative and some specifically recommend evaporative cooling where available, citing the inefficiency and high cost of installing and operating central air conditioning and the additional benefit of portable evaporative cooling and the ability to direct spot cooling where desired.

HEAT STRESS RESOURCES

1) BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS - Injury, Illnesses, and Fatalities (IFF) program data report on nonfatal occupational injuries. (www.bls.gov/iff/home.htm)

2) OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH ADMINISTRATION/U.S. Department of Labor - Technical Manual, Section III, Chapter 4, "*Heat Stress*".

(http://www.osha-slc.gov/dts/osta/otm/otm_iii/otm_iii_4.html)

3) OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH ADMINISTRATION/U.S. Department of Labor - National News Release, "*OSHA Cautions Employers and Employees: Be Aware of Heat Stress Syndrome.*" 8/3/99

(<http://www.osha.gov/media/oshnews/august99/national-19990803.html>)

"Precautions and Quick Action Could Save Lives in Hot Summer Weather," 5/28/2002

(http://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_table=NEWS_RELEASES&p_id=1272&p_text_version=FALSE)

4) OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH ADMINISTRATION/U.S. Department of Labor - OSHA Fact Sheets "*Protecting Workers in Hot Environments.*"

(<http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/heatstress/index.html>)

5) NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERE ADMINISTRATION - "*Heat Index*"

(<http://www.fox8wghp.com/weather/heat.htm>)

6) OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY - "*Summer Breezes - But Indoors*" Article published 5/2001.

7) CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL (CDC) - "*Extreme Heat - A Prevention guide to Promote Your Personal Health and Safety.*" Published 6/1/06.

8) NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH (NIOSH) - "*Working in Hot Environments,*" reprinted 1992.

(<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/hotenvt.html>)

9) UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN - "*Heat Stress Disorders Guidelines,*" personnel manual

(<http://www.umd.umich.edu/dept/safety/HeatStress.htm>)