

Safety Alert Notice



| SAFETY ALERT | | |
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| Safety Alert No | Safety Alert: 02 |  |
| Safety Alert Title | Heat Related Illness | |
| Date Issued | 9 December 2016 | |
| Recipients | LAA Contractors under Contract No. 1500755, located throughout NSW | |
| Business Unit | Loose-fill Asbestos Implementation Taskforce (LFAIT) | |
| Division | NSW Fair Trading | |
| Brief Description of Safety Alert | A LAA raised concerns regarding elevated temperature levels whilst working in the ceiling cavity environment during warm weather | |
| Details | <p>The LAA completed a Basic Thermal Risk Assessment using the Australian Institute Occupational Hygienists (AIOH). A Guide to Managing Heat Stress: Developed for use in the Australian Environment.</p> <p>The LAA reported that the results from the assessment in Wagga Wagga where the temperature in the ceiling space was estimated to be 50°C (wet bulb 32.30°C; humidity 30%) resulted in a Basic Thermal Risk Assessment score of 88.</p> <p>The recommendations in the AIOH guide is that if the total score exceeds 55 the onset of a heat-related illness is very likely and action should be taken as soon as possible.</p> <p>Other contributing factors:</p> <p>Thermal comfort is also affected by air temperature, air movement, floor temperature/surface temperature, humidity, clothing, amount of physical exertion, average temperature of surroundings and sun penetration.</p> | |
| Heat Related Illness | <p>Heat related illnesses include: Dehydration, heat cramps, heat exhaustion, heat stroke, worsening of pre-existing medical conditions</p> <p>Signs and symptoms of Dehydration:</p> <p>Dizziness, tiredness, irritability, thirst, bright or dark yellow urine, loss of appetite, fainting</p> <p>Signs and symptoms of Heat Cramps:</p> <p>Muscle pains or spasms related to loss of sweat following strenuous activity</p> <p>Signs and symptoms of Heat Exhaustion:</p> <p>Heavy sweating, pale skin, fast weak pulse, fast shallow breathing, muscle weakness or cramps, tiredness, dizziness, headache, nausea or vomiting, fainting</p> | |
| <p>If you experience any of these symptoms do not ignore them:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STOP • HYDRATE • REST IN A COOL PLACE • CONTACT YOUR MANAGER <p>SEEK MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IF REQUIRED</p> | | |

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| Heat Related Illness (Continued) | <p>Signs and symptoms of Heat Stroke:</p> <p>Sudden rise in body temperature, red hot skin, dry swollen tongue, rapid pulse, rapid shallow breathing, intense thirst, headache, dizziness, confusion, poor concentration, slurred speech, aggressive or bizarre behaviour, loss of consciousness, seizures or coma.</p> <p>See NSW Health and attached Fact Sheet for symptoms and first aid requirements for each heat related condition noted above.</p> |
| Heat Illness Hazards | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Air temperature, air movement and humidity levels• Temperature of surrounding surfaces• Impermeable PPE• Increased heat exposure due to number of ceiling insulation assessments conducted that day and impact on fatigue levels• Poor hydration levels prior to entering ceiling space• Personal health of worker - pre-existing health conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, kidney disease, obesity, pregnancy, nutritional deficit/electrolyte imbalance, epilepsy; age of worker; potential to exacerbate side effects of medication used to treat other conditions; alcohol consumption; degree of physical fitness• Personal health of worker - recent history of gastric illness, cold/influenza other ailments that may affect hydration• Working in isolation• Performing physically demanding tasks such as lifting equipment/climbing ladders/moving around the ceiling space |
| WHS Risks | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Serious heat related illness due to dehydration (can be fatal)• Impaired cognitive function impacting on thought processing and reaction times leading to increased risk of injury e.g. due to vehicle accident/slip/trip/fall• Dropped tools due to sweaty palms which may lead to personal injury or damage to property• Slips/trips/falls due to feeling faint/dizzy• Increased risk of errors; reduced compliance with SWMS/use of PPE• Burns due to contact with hot surfaces |
| Controls | <p>Suggestions for controls may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wearing appropriate light clothing and provision of equipment to aid cooling such as cooling neck ties/vests worn under PPE (see 'Further Information' for some suggestions)• Take regular breaks in cool/air conditioned environment• Minimise time spent in hot, humid environments - this may include limiting the number of inspections/day in warm weather• Drinking adequate water - 200ml of cool water every 15-20 minutes; consider adding an electrolyte replacement/oral rehydration solution.• Reduce intake of drinks containing caffeine or sugar as these may be dehydrating• Regular meals and snacks will also assist with replacement of salt and electrolytes lost through sweating• Monitor rostering of jobs and work hours to ensure adequate breaks/down time |

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| <p>Controls (Continued)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor weather conditions and consider re-scheduling appointments to cooler parts of the day or suspending inspections and scheduling for another day where extreme temperatures are predicted • Adequate supervision and communication strategies to monitor worker wellbeing <p>Information and training for workers in early identification, first aid management and reporting</p> | | |
| <p>Mobile Applications</p> | <p>Apps which may assist LAAs to monitor weather conditions and estimate the level of risk include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BOM weather app (http://www.bom.gov.au/app/) • Cancer Council Sunsmart app (http://www.sunsmart.com.au/tools/interactive-tools/free-sunsmart-app) • Thermal Risk app (http://www.thethermalenvironment.com/the-heat-stress-risk-phone-app/) • Communication options which may also work for your teams include the SafeTCard lone worker device (also has man down function, temperature sensor, 24/7 emergency monitoring and two way audio/voice communication); and the Thuraya SatSleeve which turns the iPhone or Samsung into a satellite phone. <p>Controls should be reviewed and modified depending on level of risk on the day.</p> | | |
| <p>Resources and Further Information</p> | <p>http://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/news/safety-alert/working-in-extreme-heat</p> <p>SafeWork NSW website - Managing the risk of heat related illness Personal cooling products. A Google search found a large number of suppliers so the list below is not exhaustive however some options included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal Cooling Products • GlacierTek • Arctic Heat • Veskimo • Thorzt Cooling Apparel <p>Please continue to report all hazards, near misses and incidents as soon as they occur to the Taskforce by email to:</p> <p>Steven.Nikolovski@finance.nsw.gov.au or Denis.Bellerose@finance.nsw.gov.au</p> | | |
| <p>Contact Person</p> | <p>Denis Bellerose WHS Advisor, LFAIT</p> | <p>Phone Number</p> | <p>02 9895 0986</p> |

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