

# SAFETY FIRST

## PREVENTING HEAT STRESS

June 20 may be the first official day of summer, but the heat is already coming in strong. According to an estimate by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there are approximately 702 deaths, 67,512 emergency room visits, and 9,235 individuals hospitalized per year due to environmental heat exposure.

Preventing heat stress requires a proactive approach that addresses both environmental and individual factors. Here are some strategies that solid waste and resource management professionals can implement:

- **Work Schedule:** Schedule demanding tasks during cooler parts of the day, such as early morning or late afternoon. Rotate workers to minimize prolonged exposure to heat and provide shaded rest areas for breaks.
- **Training and Awareness:** Educate workers about the risks of heat stress and how to recognize its symptoms. Train supervisors to monitor conditions and respond appropriately to signs of distress.
- **Hydration:** Encourage workers to drink plenty of water throughout the day, even if they don't feel thirsty. Provide access to cool drinking water on-site and remind employees to take regular breaks for hydration.
- **Clothing and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** Choose lightweight, breathable clothing that allows for ventilation and moisture wicking. Consider using cooling vests or other PPE designed to reduce heat stress while providing necessary protection.
- **Acclimatization:** Allow new employees or those returning from extended leave to gradually acclimate to working in hot environments. Start with shorter shifts and gradually increase exposure over time.
- **Environmental Controls:** Implement engineering controls such as shade structures, fans, or misting systems to reduce ambient temperatures in work areas. Whenever possible, automate or mechanize tasks to minimize physical exertion in hot conditions.
- **Emergency Preparedness:** Have protocols in place for responding to heat-related emergencies, including access to first aid supplies and procedures for seeking medical assistance if needed.



By prioritizing the health and safety of workers and implementing preventive measures, organizations can reduce the risk of heat-related illnesses and injuries. SWANA encourages its members to remain vigilant and proactive in addressing heat stress to ensure a safe and productive work environment for all.

For more #SWANAsafety info and resources visit [SWANA.org/safety](https://www.swana.org/safety)



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