

Heat: Conditions Change, Controls Change

Todd Jerome Jenkins | v1.0 | October 6, 2026 | Heat exposure during indoor or outdoor work

Why this matters

Yesterday's heat plan may not fit today's workload, clothing or weather. A shaded break area does little good if it is too far away to use, and new or returning workers may need extra protection.

Objective: Verify usable heat controls and recognize when to stop for symptoms or changing conditions.

Key hazards or failure points

Heavy work; heat and humidity; radiant heat; restrictive clothing or PPE; missed recovery breaks; inadequate acclimatization; and delayed recognition or response to illness.

Practical controls

- Use the site heat plan to adjust work, staffing and recovery to the actual conditions. Reduce exposure through cooling, shade, workload or scheduling changes where feasible. Account for clothing and PPE.
- Provide accessible drinking water and suitable cool recovery space. Make the planned breaks workable. Follow the acclimatization arrangements for new or returning workers and increase observation when risk changes.
- Identify who monitors conditions and workers, how to report symptoms, and how emergency help reaches the work area. Encourage early reporting without waiting for someone to collapse.

Verify It in the Field

- At the work location, have the designated person assess current conditions using the site's specified method and action criteria. Include workload and PPE; a weather-app reading alone may miss the exposure.
- Physically check that drinking water is available, the recovery area is usable and workers can reach it. Confirm staffing and timing allow the planned breaks; fix access or coverage problems before exposure.
- Confirm buddy or supervisor check-ins and the emergency communication method. Ask the crew to explain the location for responders and what they will do if someone becomes confused or collapses.

Stop and reassess

Stop work and get help for heat symptoms. Move the person to a cooler area, begin appropriate first aid and stay with them. Confusion, slurred speech or loss of consciousness require an immediate emergency call (911 in the U.S.) and cooling while help comes. Do not wait for dry skin. Also reassess after lost water, cooling or breaks, or increased heat or workload; use the site's safe return-to-work process.

Ask the crew

- What makes today's heat exposure different, including work rate and PPE?
- Can we actually use the water, recovery area and breaks as planned?
- Who calls for help, where will responders enter, and who stays with the worker?

Check the conditions—and whether the controls are usable.

Next step: Record today's changes and checks on the free JSA Planning and Field-Verification Sheet. Supervisor check and attendance are separate.

[Free JSA planning sheet](#)

References: OSHA Heat Exposure: controls, hazards, new workers and first aid. Expanded explanation and references accompany the web version.