



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

2010/07/8

Media Contact: Mary Tucker, Manager of Communications
WorkSafeNB
Telephone: 506 632-2828 or 1 800 222-9775

HEAT STRESS CAN KILL! WORKSAFE NB REMINDS THOSE WORKING IN THE HEAT TO TAKE PRECAUTIONS

With the heat wave that's currently blanketing Ontario and Quebec, and predictions from Environment Canada's senior climatologist David Phillips for warmer-than-normal conditions across Canada, WorkSafeNB reminds those working in the heat this summer of the risks of heat stress.

"It's not only outdoor workers who are at risk," said Richard Blais, chief compliance officer with WorkSafeNB, "but those who work indoors in hot or humid environments such as bakeries, restaurant kitchens, foundries, laundries and pulp mills. A combination of high outdoor temperatures with heat build-up inside can be fatal," Blais said.

"Whether working inside or outside during the hot summer months, it's important that workers listen to their bodies and learn to recognize the three main forms of heat stress and their symptoms," he said.

These are:

- Heat cramps – painful muscle spasms, excessive sweating.
- Heat exhaustion – headache, dizziness, weakness and nausea; clammy, moist skin.
- Heat stroke – hot, dry, flushed skin; severe headache; confusion, delirium, convulsions and loss of consciousness.

"Recognizing the signs of heat stress and knowing the proper first aid measures can mean the difference between life and death," Blais said, reminding employers that these are obligations under General Regulation 91-191, Subsections 22 and 23, of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.

"The best remedy for heat stress is prevention," he said, offering the following simple prevention tips:

- Engineering controls – Equipment (heat stress monitor) is available to monitor high heat areas inside and outside. Ventilation and spot cooling by local exhaust ventilation at points of high heat production can help. Shielding is required as protection from radiant heat sources. Evaporative cooling and mechanical refrigeration, and cooling fans can also reduce heat. Equipment modifications, using power tools to

reduce manual labour, and personal cooling devices or protective clothing can also reduce the hazards of heat exposure.

- Drink plenty of fluids – Drink large quantities of fluids before you begin to work and about 250 ml (one cup) every 20 minutes while you work. The best fluid to drink is water, or liquids with some sodium content.
- Increase your salt intake slightly – The salt in most prepared foods should be sufficient, but if you're working in extreme conditions, drink liquids with some sodium content.
- Wear appropriate clothing – wear light-coloured, loose-fitting clothing that doesn't leave too much skin exposed. Wear a hat in the sun, and sunscreen on exposed areas of skin.
- Take it slowly – start by working slowly and taking short, frequent breaks. Gradually increase the frequency, intensity, or duration of your tasks as your comfort level improves.

ABOUT WORKSAFENB

WorkSafeNB administers no-fault workplace accident and disability insurance for employers and their workers, funded solely through employer assessments. WorkSafeNB is committed to preventing workplace injuries and illness through education and enforcement of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.