



Hardwood Manufacturers Association

665 Rodi Road, Suite 305, Pittsburgh, PA 15235 – 412-244-0440 – www.HMAmembers.org

Working in high temps

Excessive heat can kill! To raise awareness among outdoor workers and their employers, the Department of Labor's Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) has embarked on a nationwide outreach campaign designed to prevent heat-related illnesses and deaths.

Educational resources, training tools, worksite posters, and more are all available at www.osha.gov. And in an informative video presentation, Dr. David Michaels, Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health, discusses the following important and need-to-know information.

“Who is affected?” Workers exposed to hot and humid conditions are at risk of heat illness, especially those doing heavy work tasks or using bulky, protective clothing and equipment. Some workers might be at greater risk than others if they have not built up a tolerance to hot conditions.

What is heat illness? The body normally cools itself by sweating. During hot weather, especially with high humidity, sweating isn't enough. Body temperature can rise to dangerous levels if precautions are not taken. Heat illnesses range from heat rash and heat cramps to heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Heat stroke can result in death and requires **immediate medical attention.**”

How can heat illness be prevented? Three simple words: **water, rest, shade.** Drinking water often, taking breaks, and limiting time in the heat can help prevent heat illness. Employers should take steps that help workers become acclimated to heavy work in hot conditions, especially workers who are new to working outdoors in the heat or have been away from work for a week or more. Gradually increase workloads and allow more frequent breaks.

Bottom line for both worker and employer: Know and look out for symptoms of heat illness in yourself and others. Plan for an emergency and know what to do. **“Acting quickly can save lives!”**