

OSSTF District 9 Health and Safety (519) 979-2587



Smog Alerts

<http://www.airqualityontario.com/>

Summer Severe Weather

http://www.on.ec.gc.ca/severe-weather/summerwx_factsheet_e.html

High Humidex

<http://www.ohcow.on.ca/menuew/B/HeatStresswheel.pdf>

UV Index Readings

<http://www.theweathernetwork.com/index.php?product=uvreport&uvcode=UVYQG>

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Summer Safety



Handling the Heat

The #1 health and safety concern brought forward during recent health and safety inspections is the HEAT! Although there is not a legislated upper temperature limit, employers have a duty under section 25(2)(h) of the Occupational Health and Safety Act to **take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of a worker.**

When heat is combined with other stresses such as hard physical work, loss of fluids, fatigue or some medical conditions, it may lead to heat-related illness, disability and even death.

- Plan activities accordingly. Be aware that you may be more susceptible if you are older, pregnant, asthmatic or on medications.

- Take it easy until you are accustomed to working in hot temperatures. Gradually increase your tolerance. 'Acclimatization' can take a week or two.

- Drink water often to avoid dehydration. Avoid drinking caffeinated beverages. If the Humidex reading is above 36 then it is suggested that you should be drinking twice the amount of water you normally do.

- Take frequent rest breaks when working in hot conditions. Utilize cooler areas for such breaks if possible.

- Dress lightly and avoid direct sun.

- Be alert to the warning signs of heat illness such as heat cramps, heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Take heat rash and fainting seriously.

Here are some of the suggestions the Ministry of Labour has for employers:

Engineering Controls

- Provide air-conditioned rest areas.
- Increase air movement if temperature is less than 35°C (fans).

- Reduce physical demands of work task through mechanical assistance (hoists, lift-tables, etc.).

Administrative Controls

- Increase the frequency and length of rest breaks.
- Schedule strenuous jobs to cooler times of the day.
- Provide cool drinking water near workers and remind them to drink a cup every 20 minutes or so.
- Assign additional workers or slow down pace of work.
- Train workers to recognize the signs and symptoms of heat stress and start a "buddy system" since people are not likely to notice their own symptoms.
- Workers with a medical condition should discuss working in the heat with their doctor.
- First Aid responders and an emergency response plan should be in place in the event of a heat-related illness.
- Investigate any heat-related incidents.

How Healthy is the Sun?

According to the Canadian Dermatology Association "no tan is a good tan," since all exposure to UV radiation damages the skin – whether from the sun or a tanning bed.

Even a few serious sunburns can increase your risk of getting skin cancer.

Each worksite should have a bottle of sunscreen available for all staff to use when your work duties take you outdoors.

Think about using it for: supervision, extracurriculars, gym classes, and fun activity days.

- Remember to reapply sunscreen as needed.

- Dress lightly to cover your skin and wear a hat that covers your ears.

-Remember to also protect your eyes from the sun. Wear sunglasses with total UV protection, total UVA and UVB protection or UV 400.

Classroom Reorganization Safe Summer Work

Each year, the Joint Health and Safety Committee notices a large number of injuries in late June, through the summer and in early fall as staff are cleaning up their rooms and preparing for the next year's students. Here are some pointers to remember:

- ❑ Be sure to use a proper stepladder if required.
- ❑ Only perform work for which you have been trained. If you haven't been trained it may be another bargaining unit's work or you should ask for training.
- ❑ If you are doing any activity that puts you at risk arrange for another staff member to assist. Refer to the board's Working Alone Guideline.
- ❑ Read the MSDS sheet for any cleaners you are using.
- ❑ Don't bring in products from home (whether a chemical or an electrical device).
- ❑ Avoid clutter which can lead to indoor air quality concerns.
- ❑ Review storage and material handling guidelines to avoid strains.
- ❑ Submit work order forms to administration or ask them in writing to have a concern addressed. Indicate if the work order is related to health and safety.
- ❑ Use an Indoor Air Quality Protocol Reporting Form if there are any ventilation or potential mold concerns.
- ❑ Use ergonomic guidelines to evaluate your computer station.

Research has shown that it is not just "young" workers who are at risk in the workplace, anyone "new" to a particular work situation can be at risk. If you or someone you love are starting a new job this summer ensure the "new" worker is aware of their rights and how to use them. Employers often assume the workers know the basics, only to find out after something happens that they didn't.

- ❑ The **right to participate** in health and safety programs in the workplace. Find out about the reporting procedures for health and safety concerns.
- ❑ The **right to know** about hazards they may be exposed to on the job. The training provided should cover the hazards as well as safe procedures to deal with them.
- ❑ The **right to refuse unsafe work** can be used any time a worker has a 'reason to believe' a situation is unsafe. By telling their supervisor they are using this right the situation will usually be dealt with promptly.

Whether you are an older worker who feels you don't need training in a new workplace or a young adult who is eager to please a new employer, afraid to ask questions and takes unnecessary risks, these attitudes can lead to injury.

Workers in their first 4 weeks on a new job are 6X more likely to be injured than at any other time on the job.

BBQ Safety Tips

- Remember that a cylinder which seems empty is still full of propane vapour and still presents a hazard. Propane tanks should not be stored inside and should be secured during transport.
- Make sure the BBQ burner holes and tubes are clean and in good condition. All hoses and joints should be leak tested by using a solution of dish soap and water.
- Always use gas grills outdoors at least 3 meters from the house.
- After each use, turn off the propane tank cylinder valve first, then the "ON/OFF" valve on the barbecue. This way, propane does not get trapped in the hose when the barbecue is not in use.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency estimates that between 11 and 13 million Canadians suffer from food poisoning every year.

The most common symptoms include stomach cramps, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, headache, and fever. These may occur several hours or days after eating the food.

Keep food cold and do not let it enter the temperature danger zone between 4°C (40°F) and 60°C (140°F). Use a cooler to transport perishable food.

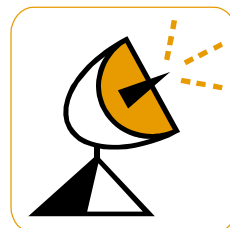
Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water before and after handling any food. Ensure that you always wash raw vegetables and fruit. Avoid cross-contamination.

West Nile Virus

- Mosquitoes bite most actively at dusk and dawn.
- Weedy, bushy, wooded and shaded areas should generally be avoided even during the day.
- Cover your skin with light-coloured clothing as much as possible.
- Use repellent containing DEET carefully if necessary
- Report all standing water on surfaces that has the potential to become stagnant so that it can be removed.
- Report the discovery of dead birds.

Have a
Safe & Healthy
Summer!

NEXT ISSUE:
VIOLENCE!



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