

Workers Need to Exercise Care in the Summer Heat

The Memorial Day weekend is often thought of as the start of the summer. This means warmer temperatures and an opportunity to complete outdoor projects. Whether it is construction of a new road, remodeling a home or working in the agriculture industry, many different occupations will be spending a great deal of time outdoors.

Each year, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) reminds workers about the dangers of heat-related illnesses. Whether it is a minor illness that keeps a person off of the job for a few days or a more serious event requiring a workers' compensation claim, those in certain fields need to be aware of the symptoms of these potentially fatal conditions.

OSHA reports that heat stroke kills approximately 30 workers each year across the United States. The agency distributes materials to both employers and employees to help them learn about some of the steps both can take to prevent injuries from becoming serious or fatal.

Signs of heat-related illness include heat rash and heat cramps, as well as heat-induced exhaustion. Employers should slowly ramp up outside tasks, and build in frequent breaks when the weather turns hot and humid. Workers will need to be sure to have water on hand, and try to stay out of the sun for prolonged periods of time.

Those who do suffer a heat-related injury or illness need to be extremely careful about their recovery. No one wants to jeopardize their employment by missing too much time from work, but returning too soon could lead to a more serious condition.

Source: Occupational Safety and Health Administration "[US Labor Department kicks off summer campaign to prevent heat-related illnesses and fatalities among outdoor workers](#)" May 7, 2012.