



# Prevent and treat heat-related illness

**Know the signs and  
beat the heat!**



## Heat cramps

### Actions to take:

- Provide water, clear juice, or a sports drink
- Encourage individuals to stop exerting themselves physically and move to a cool place
- Have them wait for the cramps to go away before doing any more physical activity

### Look for:

- Lots of sweating
- Muscle cramps (often in the stomach, arms, or legs)

### Seek medical attention if:

- The person's symptoms are getting worse
- Cramps last longer than 1 hour
- The person is on a low sodium diet, has heart problems, high blood pressure, or other medical conditions like asthma or diabetes.

## Heat exhaustion

### Look for:

#### Symptoms above plus:

- Feeling tired or weak
- Fast or weak pulse
- Cold, pale, and clammy skin
- Nausea or vomiting
- Headache or dizziness
- Irritability

### Actions to take:

- Provide water and encourage them to drink more fluids
- Move them to a cool place
- Encourage them to lie down
- Loosen their clothes or change into lightweight clothing
- Apply cool wet towels or cloths on the person

### Seek medical attention if:

- The person is throwing up
- The person is getting worse
- Symptoms last longer than 1 hour
- The person has heart problems, high blood pressure, or other medical conditions like asthma or diabetes

## Heat stroke

### Look for:

#### Symptoms above plus:

- High body temperature (higher than 103°F)
- Throbbing headache
- Seizures
- Altered mental state or confusion
- Unconsciousness (passing out)

### Actions to take:

- **CALL 911 – THIS IS A MEDICAL EMERGENCY**
- **Cool Immediately:**
  - Apply cool wet towels or soak with cool water
  - Remove outer clothing
- **Keep them safe:**
  - If there is vomiting, turn the person on their side to keep the airway open
  - If they are having a seizure, make the area safe by removing anything that may cause injury





# Extreme Heat – Best practices for farm labor camp operators

*Farm Labor Camp Operators Should Prepare for and Monitor Workers during Unhealthy Heat Waves*

## Plan and educate

- **Check the DPH [Unhealthy Heat Forecast webpage](#)** for forecasted heat risk. Pay attention to DPH e-mail alerts when an unhealthy heat wave is forecasted.
- Train workers and staff on how to **recognize and monitor the signs and symptoms of heat-related illness (HRI)** and the actions to take
- **Identify workers and staff who are at higher risk for heat-related illness.** People who work outdoors, older adults (age 65+), infants and children, pregnant people, people with limited English, and people with chronic medical conditions like heart problems, asthma, diabetes, or who are on certain medications are more likely to get sick from unhealthy heat.
- **Warn new staff and farm workers about [acclimatization](#).** New farm workers, who are not used to unhealthy heat, are more at risk during their first unhealthy heat wave. **Remember, the first is the worst.**
- **Implement a buddy system** to watch for early signs and symptoms of heat-related illness. Prioritize the people at the greatest risk and take action quickly if they see signs of HRI.

## Hydrate

- **Provide safe sanitary drinking water**, required by regulation [105 CMR 420](#) (see 420.450 and 420.456)
- Supply re-usable water bottles to stay hydrated and **provide ice** as needed
- **Advise workers on the importance of hydration** with easy-to-understand factsheets, posted near drinking water sources:
  - [Heat Stress: Hydration \(cdc.gov\)](#)
  - [Protect your workers from heat stress](#)

## Consider schedules and clothing

- **Provide [frequent breaks](#)** for workers throughout the day. The higher the temperature rises, the more breaks you should provide.
- **Avoid the hottest part of the day**, whenever possible. Work earlier and later when temperatures are cooler.
- **Schedule** slower work or lighter work for the hottest part of the day
- Encourage workers to wear **light-colored and loose-fitting clothes** to help reflect heat and promote airflow
- Encourage workers to wear high SPF sunscreen, wide-brimmed hats, light scarfs, or bandanas to **protect the head, neck, and face from sun exposure**





# Extreme Heat – Best practices for farm labor camp operators

## Maintain your property

- **Identify locations in the shade or cooler areas** particularly for higher risk people
- **Provide artificial shaded areas** with canopies or umbrellas when natural shade is not available
- **Use fans or air conditioning** in working and living areas
- Verify all **windows can be easily opened** to increase ventilation and have tight fitting screens, which is required by [regulation](#)
- **Cover or tint windows** that get late morning and/or afternoon sun. Awnings and louvers can also prevent heat from entering buildings.
- Identify and **provide priority housing** (in cooler areas) for higher risk or new workers
- Provide a list of **public locations that offer air conditioning** (area shopping malls, public library, grocery store, etc.)
- Find a local **Cooling Center** - Call [2-1-1](#) for at-risk workers or occupants and help to provide transportation if needed

