

Advice for working outside during a heatwave

Heatwaves can significantly impact horticultural workers, often spending long hours outdoors exposed to direct sunlight and high temperatures. It's important to take precautions to protect your health, such as keeping cool, staying hydrated and limiting exposure during peak heat.

Perennial have put together some practical tips to help keep you safe:



Hydration is Key

Drink plenty of water, especially when carrying out physical tasks outside, like mowing, planting or lifting. Go for electrolyte drinks and avoid sugary, caffeinated or alcoholic beverages. Choose foods with high water content like fruit and avoid heavy, oily foods.



Wear the Right Clothing

Wear loose-fitting, light-coloured clothing made from breathable fabrics like cotton. Protect yourself from the sun with long sleeves, wide-brimmed hats and neck coverings. Apply sunscreen (30 SPF+) every two hours.



Cooling Techniques

Use damp clothes, spray bottles or cooling towels on your neck and wrists. Taking time to cool down in shaded areas will help regulate body temperature during long outdoor shifts.



Pace Yourself

Plan work to avoid the hottest parts of the day where possible and schedule the most physically demanding tasks during early morning or late afternoon.

Team Safety

Remove personal protective equipment during breaks if it is safe to do so. Employers should provide free cool drinking water on-site. Use a buddy system to monitor colleagues for signs of heat stress.

Signs of Heat Exhaustion



- Dizziness
- Tiredness
- Headache
- Nausea
- Legs, arms & stomach cramps

Six Signs of Heat Stroke



- Fast breathing & heart rate
- High Temperature
- Hot skin without sweating
- Seizure
- Loss of consciousness
- Confusion and restlessness

Heat exhaustion does not usually need emergency medical help if the person cools down within 30 minutes - move them to a cooler, shaded area, remove unnecessary clothing and give them water or an isotonic drink and cool their skin with ice packs or water on the neck and armpits. If it turns into heatstroke, it needs to be treated as an emergency.



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