



# H S E

HEALTH SAFETY ENVIRONMENTAL



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## Often Overlooked Causes of Heat Exhaustion

Heat exhaustion can sneak up on workers—even when they think they're doing everything right. Beyond direct sunlight and high temps, there are *hidden factors* that can put people at risk. Let's talk about those.

### Less Obvious Causes to Watch Out For:

- Poor Hydration the Day Before**
  - ▶ You can't "catch up" on water during the shift.
  - ▶ Start hydrating the night before a hot day.
- Caffeine & Energy Drinks**
  - ▶ Diuretics (like coffee or energy drinks) increase fluid loss.
  - ▶ These can worsen dehydration quickly.
- High Humidity**
  - ▶ Sweat won't evaporate to cool you off when it's humid.
  - ▶ You may not feel as sweaty but still overheat fast.
- Overdressing or Wrong PPE Choices**
  - ▶ non-breathable clothing or dark colors trap heat.
  - ▶ Use the *lightest* and *most breathable* PPE allowed.
- Skipping Breaks or Pushing Through**
  - ▶ Heat exhaustion often starts with fatigue and dizziness.
  - ▶ Rest breaks in shaded/cool areas are **not optional**—they're protective.
- Medications or Health Conditions**
  - ▶ Blood pressure meds, heart issues, or past heat illness can raise your risk.
  - ▶ Be aware if you or a coworker has higher susceptibility.
- Working Near Hot Equipment**
  - ▶ Prolonged exposure to hot equipment can cause sweating, fatigue, and dehydration.
  - ▶ Even in cooler times of the year, hot equipment can still cause heat exhaustion.

### Prevention Tips

- **Hydrate:** Drink water every 15–20 minutes, not just when thirsty.
- **Acclimate:** Gradually increase heat exposure over time.
- **Monitor:** Watch out for symptoms like confusion, dizziness, headache, nausea, and fatigue.
- **Buddy System:** Always check on each other—especially in the heat.

### If You Suspect Heat Exhaustion:

- Move the person to shade or AC.
- Give cool water (if conscious).
- Loosen clothing.
- Use cool compresses.
- Call for medical help if symptoms worsen or don't improve.



**\*\*Working in the heat doesn't have to be dangerous—\*\*but ignoring the small stuff can add up fast.**  
Stay sharp. Stay hydrated. Stay cool.



SAFETY ALERT