

Working Safely Outdoors in Hot Weather



Summer months pose additional hazards for workers outdoors because you must protect yourself against heat, sun exposure, insects, and other summer hazards. In order to work safely, you should know the most common potential hazards and how to manage them.

SUN

Sunlight contains ultraviolet (UV) radiation, which can cause skin cancer. There is no safe level of UV rays. To block harmful UV rays:

- Cover up. Wear tightly woven clothing that you can't see through.
- Use sunscreen. Be sure to follow directions on the bottle or tube.
- Wear a hat.
- Wear UV absorbent sunglasses.
- Limit exposure when possible between 10am and 4pm – the most intense time of the day.

HEAT

- Drink plenty of water – even if you aren't thirsty.
- Wear light, loose fitting, breathable clothing.
- Take your breaks in the shade.
- Know which pieces of personal protective equipment can cause you to get warmer.

INSECTS

There are many insects that are either more active, or only active, during our warm summer months.

- Mosquitos: Not only is their bite annoying, but mosquitos are the primary carrier of the West Nile virus. Getting rid of standing water or sources of standing water is a primary way to deter mosquitos from hatching their eggs. Apply insect repellent that contains DEET to provide the most protection from mosquitos and other biting insects.
- Ticks. There are two main types of ticks in Minnesota: wood ticks and deer ticks. There are several types of diseases or illnesses that can be carried or transmitted by ticks and that would result from a tick bite. To protect yourself from ticks, wear long sleeves, and long pants while in the woods or forests. Wear light colored clothes so ticks will be easily seen and can be removed. Use tick repellents on your body but not on your face. Promptly remove the entire tick, especially the head, if you are bit. If you have questions on the type of tick, consult your medical provider.
- Bees or wasps. These insects are commonplace during the summer months, especially around floral beds or gardens. You may encounter bee or wasp nests in various locations around buildings, trees or even on the ground. The best prevention is to avoid the insect. If you are allergic to bee or wasp stings, make sure that your crew members know what to do if you are stung, or have an Epi-pen with you.

Remember Safety is No Accident!

Information courtesy of the National Safety Council and the Minnesota Safety Council