

# First Aid fact sheet (non-clinical areas) for Heat

Annex 10 of the Metro North Heatwave sub-plan

You have a duty to provide first aid equipment and facilities, and access to trained first aid officers, for sick or injured employees. Heat-related illness is progressive. If the employee is not treated or remains in a hot environment, it can be fatal.

**Note on pre-existing medical conditions and medications.** Previous heat-related illness, certain medications and medical conditions can make an employee more susceptible to heat related illness and can affect how the employee can be treated. You should alert employees to this risk and monitor them closely as far as is reasonably practicable.

## Dehydration – Seek medical advice if symptoms don’t improve or are severe

Symptoms	First aid for dehydration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mild to severe thirst (remember that thirst is satisfied before fluid loss is fully replaced).</li> <li>Dry lips and tongue.</li> <li>Slowed mental function and lowered performance.</li> <li>Reduced or dark urine output.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Drink water. Avoid caffeinated, carbonated and alcoholic drinks, and salt tablets.</li> <li>Loosen tight clothing and remove unnecessary clothing, including PPE.</li> <li>In cases of extreme heat or dehydration, replace electrolytes.</li> </ul>

## Heat rash – Seek medical advice if symptoms don’t improve

Symptoms	First aid for heat rash
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Itchy rash with small raised red spots on the face, neck, back, chest or thighs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Move to a cooler, less humid environment.</li> <li>Keep the affected area dry and remove unnecessary clothing, including PPE.</li> <li>Apply a cold compress.</li> </ul>

## Heat cramps – Seek medical advice if symptoms don’t improve

Symptoms	First aid for heat cramps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Painful and often incapacitating cramps in muscles, particularly when undertaking demanding physical work.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stop activity and rest quietly in a cool place until recovered.</li> <li>Drink an electrolyte solution.</li> </ul>

## Fainting – Seek medical advice

Symptoms	First aid for fainting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fainting (heat syncope) can occur while standing or rising from a sitting position.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lie the employee flat immediately with their legs slightly raised.</li> <li>Do not raise the head.</li> <li>Treat as for heat exhaustion.</li> </ul>

## Heat exhaustion – Call an ambulance immediately

Symptoms (not all will be present)	First aid for heat exhaustion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dehydration, thirst, and reduced or dark urine output.</li> <li>• Sweating.</li> <li>• Elevated body temperature.</li> <li>• Weakness or fatigue.</li> <li>• Headaches and dizziness.</li> <li>• Nausea.</li> <li>• Muscle cramps.</li> </ul> <p><b>Severe symptoms:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No sweating.</li> <li>• Cold, pale or clammy skin.</li> <li>• Clumsiness or slower reaction times.</li> <li>• Disorientation or impaired judgement.</li> <li>• Rapid or short breathing.</li> <li>• Rapid weak pulse or heart palpitations.</li> <li>• Tingling or numbness in fingers or toes.</li> <li>• Visual disturbance.</li> <li>• Vomiting or an unwillingness to drink.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Move the employee to a cool place with circulating air.</li> <li>• Lie the employee flat.</li> <li>• Remove unnecessary clothing, including PPE.</li> <li>• Loosen tight clothing.</li> <li>• If the employee is fully conscious sit them up to facilitate drinking and provide cool – not cold – fluid to drink.</li> <li>• Provide an electrolyte solution or water.</li> <li>• Cool the employee with cold compresses or apply cold water to skin.</li> <li>• Observe the employee and obtain medical advice if symptoms don't improve.</li> <li>• Seek medical assistance if there is no improvement or the first aider is in doubt.</li> </ul>

## Heat stroke – Call an ambulance immediately

Symptoms (not all will be present)	First aid for heat stroke
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The person stops sweating.</li> <li>• Skin can be pink, warm and dry, or cool and blue.</li> <li>• High body temperature above 40 degrees Celsius.</li> <li>• Cramps.</li> <li>• Pounding, rapid pulse.</li> <li>• Headache, dizziness and visual disturbances.</li> <li>• Nausea and/or vomiting.</li> <li>• Clumsiness or slower reaction times.</li> <li>• Disorientation or impaired judgement.</li> <li>• Irritability and mental confusion.</li> <li>• Collapse, seizures and unconsciousness.</li> <li>• Cardiac arrest. Can be characterised by unconsciousness, stopped breathing and no pulse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call 000 and evacuate by ambulance immediately.</li> <li>• Ensure that the ambulance is updated if the employee experiences seizures or becomes unconscious.</li> <li>• If cardiac arrest occurs, follow DRSABCD action plan</li> <li>• Move the employee to a cool place with circulating air.</li> <li>• Remove unnecessary clothing, including PPE</li> <li>• Loosen tight clothing.</li> <li>• Cool the employee by splashing room temperature water on their skin or sponging their skin with a damp cloth.</li> <li>• Make a wind tunnel by suspending sheets around, not on, the employee's body. Use a fan to direct gentle airflow over the employee's body.</li> <li>• Apply cold packs or wrapped ice to the employee's neck, groin and armpits.</li> <li>• If the employee is fully conscious sit them up to facilitate drinking and provide cool – not cold – fluid to drink.</li> <li>• Provide an electrolyte solution with sugar. Do not attempt to give oral fluid if the employee is not fully conscious.</li> <li>• Shivering is an automatic muscular reaction which warms the body. It will make the body temperature rise even further. If the employee starts shivering, stop cooling immediately and cover them until they stop. Once they have stopped recommence first aid treatment.</li> </ul>