

# LIVINGSTON COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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*"Commitment to Leading The Community for a Healthier and Safer Tomorrow"*

## **Frequently Asked Questions about Heat Safety**

### **What is heat exhaustion?**

Heat exhaustion is when the body is unable to cool itself down fast enough, resulting in symptoms like dizziness, thirst, heavy sweating, nausea, and weakness. In these cases, move to a cooler area, loosen clothing, sip cool water, and seek medical help only if symptoms do not improve.

Heat exhaustion is distinct from heat stroke, which can cause death or permanent disability, but heat exhaustion can lead to heat stroke if untreated. If you or someone else is experiencing confusion, dizziness, or becomes unconscious, call emergency services immediately. Move the affected person to a cooler area, loosen clothing and remove extra layers, and cool with water or ice.

### **Why is heat safety important?**

Heat is one of the leading weather-related killers in the United States, resulting in hundreds of fatalities each year. Exposure to extreme heat can result in occupational illnesses and injuries. Heat stress can result in heat stroke, heat exhaustion, heat cramps, or heat rashes. Heat can also increase the risk of injuries in workers as it may result in sweaty palms, fogged-up safety glasses, and dizziness. In extreme cases, heat stress can cause death.

### **Who is at risk?**

Workers who are exposed to extreme heat or work in hot environments such as firefighters, bakery workers, farmers, construction workers, miners, boiler room workers, and factory workers, may be at elevated risk of heat stress. Others at greater risk of heat stress include those who are 65 years of age or older, are overweight, have heart disease or high blood pressure, or take medications that may be affected by extreme heat.

### **How do I protect myself?**

- You can protect yourself by:
  - Staying in a cool place.
  - Drinking plenty of fluids.
  - Wearing a hat in the sun.
  - Avoiding spending prolonged periods of time outdoors.

**What do I do if I experience heat stress or heat stroke?**

Get to a place with a fan or air conditioning. Drink plenty of fluids and rest. If there is a continuing feeling of sickness or fainting, please call emergency services (9-1-1).

For more information, please visit

<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/heatstress/default.html#:~:text=Exposure%20to%20extreme%20heat%20can,up%20safety%20glasses%2C%20and%20dizziness.>