

Safety Newsletter



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Stress in the Workplace

Stress, as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO), is a state of worry or mental tension caused by a difficult situation. While stress is a natural human response, it can look and feel different for each person. What happens when what we feel moves beyond the normal response and becomes a chronic way of life affecting our physical and mental health, and ultimately our relationships and our jobs can be related to job-related stress. Twenty-five percent of workers say job-related stress is the number-one stressor in their lives and affects job performance and personal relationships.

According to the American Institute of Stress, 83 percent of U.S. workers say they suffer from work-related stress and nearly one million people miss work each day as a result. It's estimated that overall job stress costs the U.S. economy more than \$300 billion. With statistics like these, it is more important than ever to take stress seriously, learn to recognize the common causes, and spot the warning signs so you can address stress.



Recognize the causes of stress. Work-related stressors are many, and can look different based on things like industry, job tasks, environment, etc. However, there are some very common stressors found across all jobs and industries.

- A heavy workload is reported to be the number-one cause of stress, followed by
- Personnel issues including lack of support from superiors,
- Poor relationships with team members, and
- Exclusion, harassment, and bullying.
- Difficulty balancing work and home life also plays a role, as does job insecurity. If left unchecked, the results can be detrimental.

So, what are some things you can do to help reduce or eliminate excessive stress.

Know the warning signs. learn the warning signs of stress and identify them. Stress can manifest in many different ways. Some common stress related symptoms include:

- Headache
- trouble sleeping
- upset stomach
- increased irritability, and
- loss of appetite



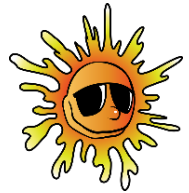
Making mental health a priority will help you to identify and address symptoms of stress before they become chronic.

Heat Illness Prevention

When the body heats up faster than it can cool itself, mild to severe illness may develop. Air temperature, humidity, and clothing can increase the risk of developing heat-related illness. Other contributing factors include age, weight, physical fitness, and nutrition. Alcohol, drug use, or pre-existing diseases like diabetes can also play a role.

Symptoms of heat-related illness

- Someone with a mild reaction to heat may have a rash called **prickly heat**. They can also have painful muscle spasms called **heat cramps**. These can happen during or after a work-related activity. Another more mild reaction may also include **fatigue**, **dizziness**, a change in physical or mental performance, or a sudden change in their behavior.
- A moderate reaction to heat is **heat exhaustion**. A person could be sweating a lot. They could have cold, moist, pale, or flushed skin. They might have thirst, extreme weakness or fatigue, as well as a headache, nausea, a lack of appetite, a rapid weak pulse, or giddiness. If not treated, the victim may collapse.
- In severe cases of heat illness, **heat stroke** may result. **This is an emergency!** With heat stroke, the victim's face flushes red and their skin is hot and dry with no sweating. They could develop a severe headache, deep, rapid breathing, a very high fever, and may become delirious. They may become unconscious, have convulsions, or lapse into a coma. This condition could be fatal without emergency medical treatment—call for medical help immediately. In the meantime, get the victim out of the hot environment. Loosen clothing and pour water over the entire body. Get air circulating around the body.



It's important to recognize the warning signs and symptoms of heat-related illness and take steps to prevent and control it. This can help reduce the likelihood of experiencing heat illness and help you to stay safe on the job.

WHEN SYMPTOMS OCCUR. Move anyone with mild or moderate symptoms to a cool, shaded place with circulating air. Have them lie down and, if conscious, have them sip cool water at frequent intervals. If symptoms continue, seek medical attention.



What to do to avoid heat illness?

- **Drink water throughout the day.**

Do not wait to become thirsty. Instead drink small amounts of water frequently -minimum, 4 cups of water/hour.



- **Limit exposure time and/or temperature** – try to schedule hot jobs for cooler times of the day or cooler seasons of the year. Take rest breaks.
- **Take time to acclimate** – Workers are at greatest risk with the sudden onset of heat. Gradually expose yourself to heat. This will help the body adapt when the temperature rises, thus reducing the likelihood of experiencing heat illness.
- Whenever possible, **start the shift earlier or later** (during the cooler hours of the day). Increasing air movement with fans or coolers can also help.
- Wear loose, light-colored clothing – clothing can affect heat buildup.
- **Avoid salt tablets** – taking salt tablets can raise blood pressure, cause stomach ulcers, and seriously affect workers with heart disease.
- **Immediately report any signs or symptoms to a supervisor** – Report symptoms you have – or, if you witness heat illness symptoms in a coworker.

Preventing Slips/Trips/Falls

It may come as a surprise that the second leading cause of unintentional injury-related death is falls. In 2022, 46,653 people died in falls at home and at work, according to Injury Facts®. For working adults, depending on the industry, falls can be the leading cause of death.

Hazards in the Workplace

In 2022, 865 workers died in falls, and hundreds of thousands were injured badly enough to require days off of work. A worker doesn't have to fall from a high level to suffer fatal injuries; 144 workers were killed in falls on the same level in 2022. While construction workers are most at risk for fatal falls from height – more than seven times the rate of other industries – falls can happen anywhere, even at a "desk job."



Falls are 100% Preventable

Whether working from a ladder, roof, or scaffolding, it's important to plan ahead, assess the risk and use the right equipment. First, determine if working from a height is absolutely necessary. Consider if there is another way to do the task safely.

- Discuss the task with coworkers and determine what safety equipment is needed
- Make sure you are properly trained on how to use the equipment
- Scan the work area for potential hazards before starting the job

- Make sure you set up the ladder on level ground
- If working outside, check the weather forecast; never work in inclement weather.
- Use the correct tool for the job. Use it as intended
- Ensure stepladders have a locking device to hold the front and back open
- Always keep two hands and one foot, or two feet and one hand on the ladder
- Place the ladder on a solid surface and never lean it against an unstable surface
- A straight or extension ladder should be 1 foot away from the surface it rests on for every 4 feet of height and extend at least 3 ft over the top edge
- Securely fasten straight and extension ladders to an upper support
- Wear slip-resistant shoes and don't stand higher than the third rung from the top
- Don't lean or reach while on a ladder, and have someone support the bottom
- Never use old or damaged equipment; check thoroughly before use



Fall Hazards at Home

Are you a weekend warrior or do-it-yourselfer? If you take on home improvement or other weekend projects, it's important to prepare. Risky projects, like installing siding, gutters or roofs, are best left to professionals. Saving money isn't worth risking a debilitating or fatal fall. At home or at work, many of the same rules apply. When taking on a project:

- Practice all of the ladder safety tips above
- Keep the work area clear of hazards and immediately clean up spills
- Read all instructions and safety precautions on your equipment
- Don't wear loose clothing that can get caught in equipment

We tend to think we're always safe on flat ground, but the thousands of injuries each year tell us otherwise. Falls are the #1 cause of death for older adults. You can fall-proof your home:

- Keep floors and surfaces clear of clutter
- Keep file cabinets and desk drawers closed
- Keep electrical and phone cords out of traffic areas
- Install handrails on stairways
- Wear sensible footwear
- Never stand on chairs, tables or anything with wheels
- Properly arrange furniture to create open pathways
- Maintain good lighting indoors and out

More than 8.5 million people were treated in emergency rooms for fall-related injuries in 2022. A fall can end in death or disability in a split second, but with a few simple precautions, you'll be sure stay safe at home and at work.