

## **SHE Bulletin 06 in 2022**

# **Looking after yourself and your colleagues in hot weather**

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### **Background**

The Met Office have issued an amber extreme heat warning for Sunday 17 July and a red extreme heat warning for Monday 18 July and Tuesday 19 July. These weather warnings cover the London area. Temperatures may rise to 40°C in some parts of London.

The Met Office has noted that changes in working practices and daily routines may be required. We have extensive operational and engineering contingency plans and arrangements to ensure the safe operation of our services. These plans ensure that our services and assets are managed in line with our well-established engineering and operational procedures, which are in place to ensure that we continue operate a safe transport system for our customers and our colleagues.

### **Heat Stress**

The heat may have an impact on our colleagues, particularly those who work outside.

Heat stress occurs when the body's means of controlling its internal temperature starts to fail. The body reacts to heat by increasing the blood flow to the skin's surface and by sweating. This cools the body as heat is carried to the surface from within the body by the increased blood flow. Sweat evaporates as a result.

Wearing protective clothing or performing heavy work in hot and humid conditions can increase the risk of heat stress because:

- Sweat evaporation is restricted by the type of clothing and the humidity of the environment,
- Heat will be produced within the body due to the work rate and, if insufficient heat is lost, deep body temperature will rise, and
- As deep body temperature rises, the body reacts by increasing the amount of sweat produced, which may lead to dehydration.

### **What are the effects of heat stress?**

Heat stress can affect individuals in different ways and some people are more susceptible to it than others. Typical symptoms are: an inability to concentrate, muscle cramps, heat rash, severe thirst, fainting, fatigue, giddiness, nausea, headache or heat stroke.

### **Instruction**

During this hot weather, it's important to take steps to stay safe in the heat and look after ourselves and others.

### **Instructions for managers**

There are a number of steps that you can take to look after your team:

- Review working practices to identify if you can reduce the potential exposure of your team to heat stress, e.g. by replanning work, rotating tasks, regular breaks, etc. where possible. You will know what is practical and possible in your team.
- Make sure your team have the opportunity to rehydrate frequently.
- Should a colleague feel symptoms of heat stress, they should report it to their manager/supervisor who should respond in line with normal working arrangements.

### Information for individuals

Here are some simple things you can do to stay cool in the heat:

- Stay well hydrated by drinking plenty of water
- Stay cool by adjusting your clothing to prevent overheating, where safe and practical to do so
- Try to stay in the shade and keep out of the sun between 11am to 3pm, when UV rays are strongest
- Wear sunscreen
- If you feel symptoms of heat stress, report to your manager/supervisor in line with normal working arrangements.

If you're travelling or working, please take care, stay safe and keep hydrated.

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