



Wilkins Safety Group

Monday, 28th July 2014

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Welcome to our latest Update E-Newsletter

As ever, please feel free to share this with friends and colleagues. You will also find PDF versions of all our other newsletters on our website: www.wilkinssafety.co.uk with lots more useful information and a wealth of leaflets covering Health and Safety topics.

A note from Jon Wilkins: As you know, last week's main article was written following a discussion about lead in a site meeting. This week the topic is "Working in this Heat" as I was asked about this in another meeting at a hospital contract on Wednesday 23rd and I agreed to write about it.

Working in this heat can affect your health in a number of ways. This week we will tell you about:

- The risks from working out in the sun;
- The risks from working in hot areas indoors in this weather, for example in loft spaces;
- The precautions and controls you should adopt both as employer and employee.

We also have 2 recent HSE cases for you to look at and consider:

- Global engineering specialist **Costain Limited** has been ordered to pay **more than £615,000 in fines and costs** after a worker was killed when a telehandler overturned during the construction of the Parkway development in Newbury
- Two farmers **failed to appoint a CDM Coordinator** for a building project where the contractor was installing a floor over a slurry lagoon in a new barn.

Do you have any questions about Health and Safety?

If you do; or if you would like us to cover any particular subject in our newsletter, please let us know.

We can be contacted on [01458 253682](tel:01458253682) or info@wilkinssafety.co.uk or why don't you start a discussion on our [Facebook page](#) or by [Twitter](#)



Working in this Heat.

A sunny day makes most of us feel good, but too much sunlight can be hard on the skin and too much heat can cause Heat stress. But it's a hot summer and the work needs to be done so what do you need to know and do?

To cover this we are going to look at working outside first and then at the problems facing indoor workers

Keep your top on

Health risks from working in the sun

A sunny day makes most of us feel good, but too much sunlight can be hard on the skin. It is not simply sudden exposure while on holiday that is harmful.

Even a tan that has been built up gradually can be harmful to health. A tan is a sign that the skin has been damaged.



The problem is caused by the ultraviolet (UV) rays in sunlight. People whose job keeps them outdoors for a long time, such as farm or building site workers, market gardeners, outdoor activity workers and some public service workers could get more sun on their skin than is healthy for them. Such people can be at greater risk of skin cancer.

What are the dangers?

In the short term...

sunburn can blister your skin and make it peel, but even mild reddening is a sign of skin damage.

In the long term...

too much sun will speed up the ageing of your skin, making it leathery, mottled and wrinkled, but the most serious effect is an increased chance of developing skin cancer.

Abnormal reactions to sunlight

Some medicines, contact with some chemicals used at work (such as dyes, wood preservatives, coal-tar and pitch products), and contact with some plants, can make your skin more sensitive to sunlight. Your works doctor or family doctor should be able to advise you further. Take this article with you.

Who is at risk of skin cancer?

To be perfectly honest the answer is **EVERYBODY** although some people are more liable to skin cancers than others. People with white skin are at most risk. Take particular care if you have:

- ☐ fair or freckled skin that doesn't tan, or goes red or burns before it tans;
- ☐ red or fair hair and light coloured eyes;
- ☐ a large number of moles - 50 or more.

Workers of Asian or Afro-Caribbean origin are less at risk, but they should still take care in the sun to avoid damage to eyes, skin ageing and dehydration.

What can you do to protect yourself?

Even if your skin is not fair and freckled, you should still be particularly careful while you are working out of doors in the summer in the three or four hours around midday. The sun is most intense at these times. Even on cloudy days, UV can filter through.

Some Dos and Don'ts to avoid the dangers are:

- ☑ **Do** try to avoid the mild reddening which is a sign of skin damage as well as being an early sign of burning.
- ☑ **Do** try to work and take your breaks in the shade if you can - this will reduce your risk of harming your skin and also help to keep you cool.
- ☑ **Do** continue to take care when you go on holiday - your skin remembers every exposure.
- ☑ **Don't** be complacent; get to know your skin's most vulnerable areas (e.g. back of neck, head) and keep them covered.
- ☑ **Don't** try to get a tan - it's not a healthy sign. It might look good but it indicates that the skin has already been damaged. A suntan does not eliminate the long term cancer risk which is associated with prolonged exposure to the sun; nor will it protect against premature ageing.

Clothing

Cover up. Ordinary clothing made from close-woven fabric, such as a long-sleeved work shirt and jeans, will stop most of the UV.

Wear a hat. A wide-brimmed hat will shade your face and head, the areas which suffer most from sunlight. A safety helmet will provide some shade for the head. A hanging flap can protect the back of your neck.

Keep your shirt on, especially while you are working around midday. Don't be tempted to leave it off, even if your skin tans easily and does not burn.

Sunscreens

Hats and other clothing are the best form of protection, but sunscreen creams and lotions can add useful protection for parts of your body that are not easy to shade from the sun. Look for a sun protection factor (SPF) rating of 15 or more as it protects against UVA and UVB.

Read the supplier's instructions on how it should be applied. Don't forget the backs of your hands.

Check your skin

The first warning sign is often a small scabby spot which does not clear after a few weeks. Look for changed or newly formed moles or any skin discolouration. It is normal for new moles to appear until you are about 18 years old. As an adult you should pay particular attention to any growths which appear on the face, especially around the nose and eyes, or on the backs of the hands; you should show your doctor any moles which change in size, colour, shape or start to bleed.

If you notice any of these signs consult your own doctor, or your works medical department if you have one.



Heat stress from working indoors

In this section of the article we look at the possible effects of the heat to those working indoors, especially those working in hot places like a bakery or dry cleaners or those working in confined spaces such as the attic. These people are not exposed to the same risks as those working outside. Instead they are more prone to suffering from **heat stress**

What is heat stress?

Heat stress occurs when the body's means of controlling its internal temperature starts to fail. Air temperature, work rate, humidity and work clothing are all factors which can cause heat stress. It may not be obvious to someone passing through the workplace that there is a risk of heat stress.

How does the body react to heat?

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 by the increased blood flow and sweat evaporates. Heat can also be lost by radiation and convection from the body's surface.

Typical example of a heat stress situation

Someone wearing protective clothing and performing heavy work in hot and humid conditions could be at 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.
- As deep body temperature rises the body reacts by increasing the amount of sweat produced, which may lead to dehydration.
- Heart rate also increases which puts additional strain on the body.
- If the body is gaining more heat than it can lose then the deep body temperature will continue to rise. Eventually it reaches a point where the body's control mechanisms start to fail.

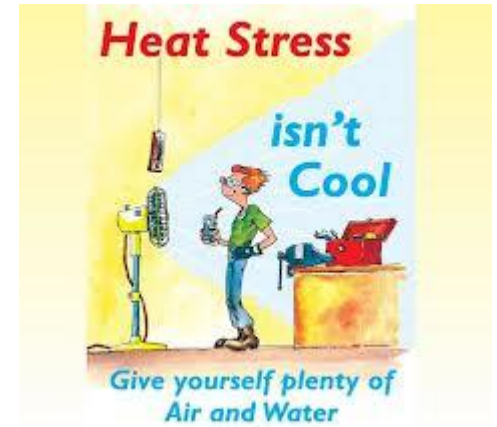
The symptoms will get worse the longer someone remains working in the same conditions.

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 – a late symptom of heat stress;
- fainting;
- heat exhaustion – fatigue, giddiness, nausea, headache, moist skin;
- heat stroke – hot dry skin, confusion, convulsions and eventual loss of consciousness. This is the most severe disorder and can result in death if not detected at an early stage.



Where does heat stress occur?

Examples of workplaces where people might suffer from heat stress because of the hot environment created by the process or restricted spaces are:

- glass and rubber manufacturing plants;
- mines;
- compressed air tunnels;
- in loft areas;
- conventional and nuclear power stations;
- foundries and smelting operations;
- brick-firing and ceramics plants;
- boiler rooms;
- bakeries and kitchens;
- laundries and dry cleaners.

In these industries working in the heat may be the norm. For others it will be encountered less often depending on the type of work being done and changes in the working environment, e.g. seasonal changes in outside air temperature can contribute significantly to heat stress.

What do I need to do about heat stress?

Over time people can adapt to hot conditions by sweating more and changing their behaviour to try and cool down, e.g. removing clothing, taking cool drinks, fanning themselves, sitting in the shade or a cool area, and/or reducing their work rate. However, in many work situations such changes may not be possible, e.g. when protective clothing has to be worn.

Where there is a possibility of heat stress occurring you will need to consider this when carrying out your risk assessment. What do I need to look at in the risk assessment?

When carrying out your risk assessment, the major factors you need to consider are:

- work rate – the harder someone works the more body heat they generate;
- working climate – this includes air temperature, humidity, air movement and effects of working near a heat source;
- worker's clothing and respiratory protective equipment – may mean that sweating and other means of the body regulating its temperature are less effective;
- worker's age, build and medical factors – may affect an individual's tolerance.



Firstly, talk to the workers involved to see whether they are suffering early signs of heat stress. If there is a problem, you may need to get help from others who are more experienced in determining the risk from hot environments, e.g. occupational hygienists or occupational health professionals.

How can I reduce the risks?

- Remove or reduce the sources of heat where possible:
- Control the temperature using engineering solutions, e.g. change the processes, use fans or air conditioning,

use physical barriers that reduce exposure to radiant heat.

- Provide mechanical aids where possible to reduce the work rate.
- Regulate the length of exposure to hot environments by:
 - allowing workers to enter only when the temperature is below a set level or at cooler times of the day;
 - issuing permits to work that specify how long your workers should work in situations where there is a risk;
 - providing periodic rest breaks and rest facilities in cooler conditions.
- Prevent dehydration. Working in a hot environment causes sweating which helps keep people cool but means losing vital water that must be replaced. Provide cool water in the workplace and encourage workers to drink it frequently in small amounts before, during (where possible) and after working.
- Provide personal protective equipment. Specialised personal protective clothing is available which can incorporate personal cooling systems or breathable fabrics. The use of some protective clothing or respiratory protective equipment may increase the risk of heat stress.
- Provide training for your workers, especially new and young employees, telling them about the risks of heat stress associated with their work, what symptoms to look out for, safe working practices and emergency procedures.
- Allow workers to acclimatize to their environment and identify which workers are acclimatized or assessed as fit to work in hot conditions.
- Identify employees who are more susceptible to heat stress because of an illness, condition or medication that may contribute to the early onset of heat stress, e.g. pregnant women or those with heart conditions. You may need advice from an occupational health professional.
- Monitor the health of workers at risk. Where a residual risk remains after implementing as many control measures as practicable, you may need to monitor the health of workers exposed to the risk. You should then seek advice from an occupational health professional.

If you are an employer who is unsure if they are protecting their employees enough in this heat, or maybe you just want some more advice about your legal duties, then drop an email to our CEO Jon Wilkins on jon@wilkinssafety.co.uk or call the office on [01458 253682](tel:01458253682).

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Now to the latest HSE cases:

Costain ordered to pay over £615,000 after Parkway worker's death

Global engineering specialist Costain Limited has been ordered to pay more than £615,000 in fines and costs after a worker was killed when a telehandler overturned during the construction of the Parkway development in Newbury.

Mark Williams, 41, from Nuneham Courtenay, was using the vehicle to lift a pallet of tiles to a fourth story roof when the incident happened on 20 July 2011.

He tried to flee the telehandler as it began to topple, but he was unable to move away in time and it landed on top of him, causing fatal crush injuries.

His death was investigated by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), which found the safety of the vehicle was compromised by limited space and other obstructions in the area where he was required to work.



Costain Limited, the principal contractor for the Parkway development, was prosecuted for failing to provide a safer system of work.

Reading Court heard during a five week trial earlier this year (from 3 March 2014) that Mr Williams, a married father-of-two, was part of a team responsible for tiling a number of roofs.

He was operating the telehandler with the boom fully raised but not extended. Raising the boom reduced the overall length of the vehicle, however it ultimately caused it to overbalance as it was being turned and manoeuvred.

HSE inspectors established that Mr Williams had no option but to operate the vehicle in this way. The space between the buildings where he worked was almost the same length of the telehandler with the boom lowered, and meant he would have had no turning circle.

The court was told the vehicle was not suited for use in this area, and that had the space constraints been properly assessed and a better system of work put in place then Mr Williams death could have been avoided.

Costain Limited, of Costain House, Vanwall Business Park, Maidenhead, was fined a total of £525,000 and ordered to pay a further £90,577 in costs after being found guilty of breaching Sections 2(1) and 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, and two breaches of Regulation 3 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

After sentencing HSE principal inspector Steve Hull commented:

"This was a tragic and entirely preventable death. Mark Williams was required to use a telehandler that was wholly unsuited to the confined area he worked in.

"He had no option but to raise the boom so he could turn the vehicle, and in doing so he critically undermined the stability, resulting in the inevitable overturn.

"He should have been provided with alternative, more appropriate equipment and a better system of work. Costain had clear responsibilities to ensure that happened, but they failed to properly assess the risks and ultimately failed Mr Williams."

Shenda Long, Mark's mother, added:

"I have always felt that I have lived a very privileged and happy life, but all that changed on 20 July 2011 when police officers knocked on our door and informed me that our beloved son had been killed.

"Mark was a loving son, brother, partner, friend and an amazing dad to his two daughters who brought sunshine, happiness, joy, laughter and love into our family.

"Little did we know that fateful day that it would be the last morning we would feel peaceful, happy and complete. How could we know that the simple act of Mark going to work, as he done every day for years, would result in him being killed, and my family's world ending.

"Mark was totally let down by the people he worked for and trusted."

Mr Williams' employer, Attley's Roofing Limited, was earlier cleared of identical health and safety breaches at the end of the initial trial on 3 April. The company, of Spital Farm, Thorpe Mead, Banbury, was acquitted after being jointly prosecuted by HSE alongside Costain.

Farmers slapped with £25,000 fine after failing to comply with CDM Regs

TWO brothers have been fined for breaking safety legislation after a contractor suffered serious brain injuries in a fall while carrying out building work at one of their farms.

The contractor was installing a floor over a slurry lagoon in a new barn at Gwarllwyn Farm, near Llandysul, on June 12, 2012, when the floor panel he and a workman were standing on gave way, plunging them into the lagoon four metres below.

The contractor suffered a head injury and was hospitalised for two months and he is still undergoing rehabilitation. The workman escaped without injury.

The incident was investigated by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) which prosecuted farm owners Andrew Evans and his brother, David Evans, at Aberystwyth Magistrates Court.

The court heard the contractor was hired to create a cattle shed floor over an existing slurry lagoon. He erected concrete pillars in the slurry pit then put pre-formed concrete beams on top and laid concrete wall panels across the beams instead of panels specifically designed for flooring. These were to hold a slatted floor and cattle cubicles.

HSE found:

- The brothers failed to appoint a construction and design co-ordinator who would have advised them on their responsibilities as a construction client and how to ensure the project was managed safely and without risk to health.
- The brothers also did not have a principal contractor so had assumed that role, giving them the responsibility for planning, managing and monitoring the health and safety aspects of the construction work.
- No design or construction plans existed and there were no risk assessments or agreed safe system of work. They also failed to check the contractor was suitably competent to do the work. The wall panels he used were unsuitable and the workmen he employed on site had no training or experience in construction.
- In addition, the brothers allowed the contractor to use an untrained crane driver, using a 25 tonne lift capacity crane that had not been thoroughly tested for ten years, despite this being an annual requirement.
- They also failed to supervise or monitor the construction work, which involved a great deal of working at height, so there were no suitable measures to prevent or mitigate any effects of a fall.

Andrew Evans, of Gwarllwyn Farm, Rhydlewist, Llandysul and David Evans of Esgair Tangwst, Rhydlewist, each pleaded guilty to two breaches of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations and were each fined a total of £9,000. Each was ordered to pay costs of £3,560.

HSE Inspector, Phil Nicolle, speaking after the hearing, said:

“Farmers cannot ignore their legal duties for health and safety when arranging construction work on their farms. The contractor in this case suffered life-threatening injuries and has yet to make a full recovery.”

“If farmers use contractors for any work they simply cannot tell them what to do and let them get on with it. Both the client and the contractor have legal duties for health and safety that can’t be passed to each other by contract.”



“This means they have to work with each other to make sure the job is done safely. Farmers must always question their contractors about their health and safety arrangements.”

More information on construction and design management responsibilities can be found on the Wilkins Safety Group website at <http://www.wilkinssafety.co.uk/cdm/duties/index.html>

Had they used a professional CDM Coordinator such as [The Wilkins Safety Group](#) they would have had a source of advice and project management skill to help them design and carry out the project with safety in mind.

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If you have any queries on any health and safety matter, please contact Jon Wilkins on [01458 253682](tel:01458253682) or by email on jon@wilkinssafety.co.uk



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