

YOU MIGHT ALREADY

UNITED
WORKERS UNION



BE FEELING HEAT STRESS








The symptoms of heat fatigue and heat illness include dehydration, dizziness, heatstroke, heat cramps, irritability, heat rash, fainting, tiredness or weakness, headaches, migraines and nausea.

Speak up. You have the right to a safe workplace.

Is your workplace El Niño Ready?

The 2023/2024 El Niño high risk summer is expected to intensify heat waves, escalate risk of bushfires and increase drought conditions. Every worker can be impacted by heat at work. Combined with climate change we will experience intensified climate disasters and hotter days. Extreme heat, heat fatigue and heat illness place your health and safety at risk. It is your employer's responsibility to protect your safety at work, that includes threats from extreme heat. Heat illness is a silent killer, and no one should have to risk their lives by working while exposed to extreme weather.

You have rights and you can exercise them:

-  Anyone can stop work when there is an imminent risk to your health and safety, this includes extreme heat, and climate disasters. *Eg. Bushfires and smoke.*
-  It is your employer's responsibility to keep you safe and prevent threats to your Health and Safety including, extreme heat, smoke, heat illness and climate risks.
-  Workers carrying out work in extreme heat must be able to do so, without risks to their health and safety.
-  **Heat fatigue and heat illness symptoms** include dehydration, dizziness, heatstroke, heat cramps, irritability, heat rash, fainting, tiredness or weakness, headaches, migraines and nausea.
-  Everyone experiences heat differently depending on factors such as their body composition. If you feel or see the effects of heat stress, look out for each other and speak up by talking to your HSR or organiser.

Climate Justice is Union Business.

Scan here to join our Climate Action Group.



Heat at Work Checklist:

- Do you have a heat policy? If so, is your heat policy El Niño ready?
- Do you have an elected HSR? Do you know who your HSR is?
- Don't have one? You can elect your own rep who is not your employer, management, or HR. Talk to your organiser about electing your UWU HSR.
- Do you know that anyone can stop work whenever you feel there is a risk to your health and safety?
- Does your workplace have appropriate ventilation to allow adequate airflow?
- Is your work wear/uniform appropriate for hot temperatures?
eg. Breathable material, short pants and t-shirts? Ideally workwear should be loosefitting, comfortable and breathable material where possible.
- Do you have a plan for extreme heat discomfort?
Anything above 35 degrees is extreme heat discomfort and will impact your ability to carry out tasks safely and effectively.
- Is your workplace and your employer bushfire ready? Do you have information about air quality and hazards from bushfire smoke?
- Has information been distributed on the signs and symptoms of heat stress and illness?
- Do you have thermometers in your workplace that are visible to you, to monitor the temperature?
- Do you have a process to brief with your colleagues during shift handover to discuss any hazards, heat impacts and health & safety with the next shift workers?
- Does your employer modify your hours and/or your workload if you are working during the hottest part of the day?

