

WORK HEALTH & SAFETY ALERT

WORKING IN HEAT

Every employer or Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU) has a duty of care to “ensure the health and safety of their workers and others at the workplace.” This includes ensuring that workers are not exposed to hazardous temperatures.

Between 2005 and 2014, 13 workers died in Australia from being exposed to ‘environmental heat’ - five were in Queensland including a 40-year-old.

As the temperature rises the body becomes less able to cope with the strain, serious health risks such as:

Heat Cramps: These are painful cramps in the legs and arm muscles, the back and the stomach. They are due in part to excessive loss of salt during sweating.

Heat Rash: Skin rashes over arms, shoulders and chest and behind the knee often associated with a tingling or prickly feeling are a sign of excessive heat exposure.

Heat Exhaustion: This happens when the body loses too much water too quickly.

The blood pumped to the skin for cooling purposes depletes the brain of sufficient blood and this can cause fainting. The signs are heavy sweating (clammy skin), vomiting, paleness, dizziness, low temperature, tiredness and a weak pulse.

Heat Stroke: This occurs when the body is no longer able to control its internal temperature. Because sweating stops, a high fever results that can lead to damage to organs such as the brain, liver and kidneys.

If you or others are experiencing any of these symptoms you should seek medical advice. As the temperature rises, the likelihood of workers’ health suffering increases.

Hot temperatures cause discomfort and hazards such as:

- reduced concentration (and increased likelihood of accidents)
- increased discomfort in use of protective clothing and equipment
- aggravation of effects of other hazards, e.g. noise
- aggravation of pre-existing illnesses
- heat stress, exhaustion and fainting.

Heat discomfort is felt at 30 degrees Celsius and all efforts should be taken by employers to keep temperatures below this level or to provide conditions for outdoor workers that help reduce the effects of seasonal hot conditions where the temperature exceeds 30 degrees.

Both indoor and outdoor work measures to be taken should include:

- avoiding work in areas where workers are exposed to heat
- providing air-conditioned rest rooms
- changing the rate of work e.g. taking longer
- providing lighter alternative work
- use of air-circulating fans
- use of shade cloths
- use of trees to shade buildings and outdoor areas
- provision of constant supplies of cool drinking water.



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When work cannot be re-scheduled or artificial cooling provided then a regime of rest breaks in cool areas with cool drinks is essential.

The temperatures for rest breaks will vary depending upon usual temperatures and whether workers are acclimatised. To minimise the risks, the temperature needs to be constantly monitored.

Your industry/union may have different schedules than those below that consider the type of work and conditions for your workplaces. The below is a recommendation for workers where those arrangements are NOT in place.

For parts of the country that are normally cooler due to variable climate many workers are not acclimatised.

30 to 32 degrees Celsius	10 minutes rest every hour
32 to 35 degrees Celsius	15 minutes rest every hour
35 to 38 degrees Celsius	30 minutes rest every hour
Over 38 degrees Celsius	Rest in a ventilated area until less than 38 degrees Celsius or go home

For hotter parts of the country

Above 36 degrees Celsius	10 minutes rest every hour
Above 38 degrees Celsius	15 minutes rest every hour
Above 40 degrees Celsius	30 minutes rest every hour
Over 42 degrees Celsius	45 minutes break every hour and no more than 2 hours at this temperature

The effects of heat are more pronounced if the air quality is poor, for example due to smoke haze. When it is hot and there is smoke haze the body spends energy keeping itself cool and coping with the effects of smoke haze. See ACTU Alert on Smoke Haze.

Some people may have physical or medical health conditions, making them more susceptible to hot conditions.

Hydration

Thirst is not a reliable guide for dehydration. It's essential to drink especially when working or exercising in the heat. Drink water, not energy or sports drinks. Urine that is light yellow is a good indication that you're getting enough fluid.

First Aid

If someone is suffering from heat stress they must immediately report to and be given first aid. This includes resting in cooler area, keeping the skin wet and fanning to improve evaporation and cooling of the skin.

If you have concerns about exposure in your workplace contact your union.



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Join today.



www.usu.org.au/join



1300 136 604



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Application For USU Membership

NEW SOUTH WALES LOCAL GOVERNMENT, CLERICAL, ADMINISTRATIVE, ENERGY, AIRLINES & UTILITIES UNION

SECTION A YOUR DETAILS:

FORM 1-230113. OFFICE USE ONLY

Membership No. _____

NAME: Title: _____ Surname: _____ Given Names: _____ DOB: / /

EMAIL: Home: _____ Work: _____

PHONE: Home: _____ Work: _____ Mobile: _____

HOME ADDRESS: _____ Postcode: _____

EMPLOYER: _____

WORKSITE ADDRESS: _____ Postcode: _____

OCCUPATION: _____

EMPLOYMENT BASIS: Full Time Part Time Contractor Casual Apprentice Temp Seasonal
* Please circle income threshold: A B C D E F G H I J K L M
* Please note subscription rates are determined by income thresholds - see attached rates card (also available at www.usu.org.au)

SECTION B APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP:

Financial Obligations: Members shall pay subscriptions in accordance with the Rules of the Union.

Resignation: 1. A member may resign membership of the Union by written notice delivered or sent to the registered address of the Union.

2. A notice of resignation takes effect:
a. where the member ceases to be eligible for membership of the Union:
i. on the day on which the notice is received; or
ii. on the day specified in the notice, which is a day not earlier than the day when the member ceases to be eligible to become a member;
whichever is the later; or
b. in any other case:
i. at the end of two weeks after the notice is received, or
ii. on the day specified in the notice; whichever is the later.

3. Any member resigning shall be liable for the payment of all subscriptions, fines and levies owing to the Union under the Rules at the date of leaving, and such monies may be sued for and recovered in the name of the Union, subject to the Fair Work Act 2009 (C'th) and the Industrial Relations Act 1996 (NSW) or any Act amending the same. *Please note that the New South Wales Local Government, Clerical, Administrative, Energy, Airlines & Utilities Union trades as the **United Services Union**.*

I, the undersigned, hereby apply for membership of the NSW Local Government, Clerical, Administrative, Energy, Airlines & Utilities Union (trading as the United Services Union - USU) and the NSW Local Government, Clerical, Administrative, Energy, Airlines & Utilities Branch of the Australian Municipal, Administrative, Clerical and Services Union (ASU).

I agree to abide by the Rules of the Union as amended from time to time in accordance with the Fair Work Act 2009 (C'th) and the Industrial Relations Act 1996 (NSW). I hereby authorise the USU/ASU to act as bargaining agent on my behalf with my employer, in all matters affecting my employment with my employer.

I understand my authorisation remains in force until I revoke it in writing in accordance with the Fair Work Act 2009 (C'th) and the Industrial Relations Act 1996 (NSW). I have read the information supplied relating to financial obligations of membership and the circumstances and manner in which I may resign my membership.

Please indicate the name of person who provided this membership form to you.
Name of person: _____ M'ship No. (if known): _____

Applicant's Signature: **X** _____ Date: / /

Privacy Statement

Note: The United Services Union is bound by the Privacy Act 1988 (C'th). The Union's Privacy Statement is available by contacting the USU on 1300 136 604 or on the website at www.usu.org.au

SECTION C PAYMENT METHOD:

I, _____ Surname: _____ Given Name/s: _____

wish to pay my USU subscription: Weekly Fortnightly Monthly Quarterly
on a: Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday effective From: / /

DETAILS OF ACCOUNT TO BE DEBITED

I/We _____ authorise, until further notice, the UNITED SERVICES UNION (User ID: 062819), to debit my/our account described in the schedule below, any amount which the USU may debit or charge me/us through the Direct Debit system.

Name of Financial Institution/Branch: _____

Account Name: _____ (If joint account two signatures are required below) BSB No: _____ Account No: _____

I authorise my employer to release my financial institution details, including any changes from time to time, to the USU so that direct debit of Union subscriptions can be commenced from my account. I recognise that my employer has no financial accountability in this transaction and that if I have provided details of more than one account to my employer, the USU will contact me to determine which account I wish to use for paying USU subscriptions. This authority will not lapse in its binding effect by the passage of time and will only be revoked by a further written authority.

OR CREDIT CARD DETAILS

Card Number: _____ Expiry date: / Mastercard Visa

OR BPAY/STATEMENT/PAYROLL DEDUCTION OPTION

I will pay my subscription via BPAY/Statement. I will pay my subscription via Payroll Deduction. I understand that I will be invoiced quarterly. Payroll deduction authority can be downloaded at www.usu.org.au

I/We authorise the following: 1. The USU to verify the details of the above named account with my/our Financial institution
2. The Financial institution to release information allowing the USU to verify the above account details.

I agree at all times to have sufficient funds or credit to ensure the electronic transfers occur irrespective of the method of payment. Failure to pay could affect whether I am a financial member in accordance with the rules of the union.

Signature/s: **X** _____ Date / /

Return this form by fax to (02) 9261 3378, email to membership@usu.org.au or mail to: USU, PO Box A1154 Sydney South 1235