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# Construction Heat Stress Policy Evaluation Checklist

A four-pillar framework for safety professionals to evaluate whether their current heat illness prevention plan is comprehensive — and where to close the gaps before peak summer.

**HOW TO USE THIS CHECKLIST**

Walk through each of the four pillars below and check off the items your current heat illness prevention plan covers. Use the Notes column to capture gaps, ownership, or specific actions to take. Total your score at the end to see where to focus before peak summer.

**EVALUATION DETAILS**

| COMPANY | JOBSITE / LOCATION |
|---|---|
| EVALUATOR NAME | DATE COMPLETED |

## 1 PILLAR 1 Prevention

*Prevention is the most important lever — and the most failed. Every item below is a non-negotiable component of a comprehensive heat illness prevention plan.*

| ✓ | STANDARD | NOTES / GAPS / OWNER |
|---|---|---|
| ☐ | **Written heat illness prevention plan exists** Plan is documented in plain language with visuals, accessible to all workers including seasonal hires and contractors. About 13% of construction companies have no written plan at all. | |
| ☐ | **Plan is communicated in workers' primary language** Spanish-speaking crews and contractors cycling on-site receive the policy in a format they can use without interpretation. | |
| ☐ | **Real-time, on-site environmental monitoring is in place** | |

| ✓ | STANDARD | NOTES / GAPS / OWNER |
|---|---|---|
| | WBGT and heat index are monitored at each jobsite — not from the nearest airport. On-site monitoring is what OSHA's proposed rule expects. | |
| ☐ | **Work-to-rest cycles adjust to actual conditions**<br>Cycles automatically tighten as WBGT or heat index crosses threshold, factoring in workload intensity, PPE, and acclimatization status. | |
| ☐ | **Cool, potable water is accessible at every work area**<br>At least one quart per worker per hour, available within close walking distance. Water provided every 15 minutes during heat exposure per NIOSH. | |
| ☐ | **Clean, private restrooms are available on-site**<br>Workers reduce hydration when restrooms are inadequate. Restroom access is a hidden hydration lever most plans miss. | |
| ☐ | **Active cooling resources are available during shift**<br>Cooling towels, vests, fans, shade structures, or air conditioning. Cooling should happen before, during, and after the workday — not only at the end. | |
| ☐ | **Heat acclimatization protocol for new and returning workers**<br>10–14 days of gradually increased exposure for new hires and workers returning from extended absences. Acclimatization degrades within days once exposure stops. | |
| ☐ | **Buddy system or check-in protocol for solo work**<br>No worker operates alone in heat without a defined check-in cadence and contact protocol if a check-in is missed. | |
| ☐ | **Physiological monitoring (wearables) considered or in use**<br>Where deployed, wearables that track core temperature, heart rate, or other indicators meet health-data and privacy regulations. | |
| ☐ | **Formal heat stress training for all workers and supervisors**<br>Training covers recognition, prevention, hydration, acclimatization, and reporting. 12% of workers report never receiving formal heat stress training. | |

| ✓ | STANDARD | NOTES / GAPS / OWNER |
|---|---|---|
| ☐ | **Decision authority for stopping work is clearly defined**<br>Workers and supervisors know who is empowered to call a heat stop — and that decision authority does not disappear when supervisors step off-site. | |

PILLAR 2

# 2 Recognition

*Even with strong prevention, things go wrong. Recognition speed is the difference between a near-miss and a fatality.*

| ✓ | STANDARD | NOTES / GAPS / OWNER |
|---|---|---|
| ☐ | **Workers and supervisors trained to recognize early symptoms**<br>Symptoms include headache, nausea, dizziness, confusion, hot skin, weak pulse, extreme fatigue, very dark urine, and fainting. | |
| ☐ | **Reporting mechanism is in place and known to workers**<br>Workers know exactly how, where, and to whom to report symptoms — for themselves and for coworkers — without fear of retaliation. | |
| ☐ | **Heat stroke misconceptions addressed in training**<br>Training explicitly covers that exertional heat stroke victims often continue sweating. The 'dry skin = heat stroke' rule has cost lives by delaying response. | |
| ☐ | **Visual symptom reference is posted at jobsite**<br>A laminated, visual symptom card is visible at break areas and entry points so workers and supervisors can spot signs without recall. | |

PILLAR 3

# 3 Treatment

*Cold water immersion is the most effective treatment for exertional heat stroke. Emergency response only works if it has been planned and practiced before it is needed.*

| ✓ | STANDARD | NOTES / GAPS / OWNER |
|---|---|---|
| ☐ | **Cold water immersion equipment is available on-site**<br>A tub, ice supply, and water source are pre-staged for immediate use. Cold water immersion is the most effective treatment for exertional heat stroke. | |
| ☐ | **Site-specific written emergency action plan (EAP)**<br>EAP is documented for each jobsite, not generic. Includes location-specific access points, EMS routing, and on-site response steps. | |
| ☐ | **EAP is practiced at least once per year**<br>Full team has rehearsed the heat illness response — not just read it. Recognition speed in a real event comes from practiced response, not paper. | |
| ☐ | **Local EMS contact info is verified and posted**<br>Phone numbers, addresses, and access instructions are current and visible to anyone on-site who may need to call for help. | |
| ☐ | **Roles assigned for heat emergency response**<br>Clear assignment for who calls 911, who begins cooling, who clears the way for EMS, and who stays with the affected worker. | |
| ☐ | **On-site healthcare provider or trained responder identified**<br>Where possible, a healthcare provider or trained athletic trainer is on-site to take rectal temperature for accuracy — though cooling never waits for that step. | |

# 4 PILLAR 4
# Return to Work

*Care does not stop at the hospital door. A structured return protects the worker and the project.*

| ✓ | STANDARD | NOTES / GAPS / OWNER |
|---|---|---|
| ☐ | **Structured, individualized return-to-work plan**<br>Workers treated for heat illness follow a progressive reintegration plan. Recovery does not stop when symptoms resolve. | |
| ☐ | **Athletic trainer or healthcare provider monitors recovery**<br>Workload is adjusted during reintegration based on professional monitoring, not assumed full readiness on day one back. | |
| ☐ | **Modified duty options exist during reintegration**<br>Lower-intensity tasks, shorter shifts, or shaded assignments are available so workers do not have to choose between recovery and a paycheck. | |
| ☐ | **Prior heat illness flagged in worker's record**<br>Workers with a history of heat illness are flagged for additional monitoring and earlier intervention thresholds going forward. | |

# Scoring Summary & Action Plan

*Tally the boxes you checked across each pillar. The pillars where you scored lowest are where to invest first — usually before peak summer hits.*

| PILLAR | TOTAL ITEMS | YOUR SCORE | PRIORITY (HIGH / MED / LOW) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Pillar 1: Prevention** | 12 | ____ / 12 | |
| **Pillar 2: Recognition** | 4 | ____ / 4 | |
| **Pillar 3: Treatment** | 6 | ____ / 6 | |
| **Pillar 4: Return to Work** | 4 | ____ / 4 | |
| **TOTAL** | 26 | ____ / 26 | |

## Top Three Actions Before Peak Summer

*Based on this evaluation, list the three highest-priority gaps to close before peak summer. Assign an owner and target date for each.*

| # | GAP TO CLOSE | OWNER | TARGET DATE |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | | |
| 2 | | | |
| 3 | | | |

**ABOUT THIS CHECKLIST**

Built by Perry Weather based on the the four-pillar framework developed at the October 2024 Washington, D.C. heat task force, co-sponsored by the National Athletic Trainers Association and the Korey Stringer Institute. Perry Weather provides on-site WBGT and heat index monitoring, automated alerts, and adaptive work-to-rest cycles built for construction jobsites.

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