



**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Rafael López, Secretary

<b>Policy Number:</b>	DHS DAO #25- 005
<b>Policy Title:</b>	<b>Extreme Heat Illness Prevention Management Policy and Plan</b>
<b>Release Date:</b>	July 30, 2025
<b>Effective Date:</b>	Jul 30, 2025
<b>Approved By:</b>	Rafael López, Secretary
<b>Revision Date(s):</b>	n/a
<b>Supersedes:</b>	Any directive, guidance, process, or policy document prior to July 28, 2025, concerning this subject.
<b>Originating Office:</b>	Division of Administrative Operations, in partnership with the Office of Talent Engagement and Management
<b>Summary:</b>	The DHS Extreme Heat Illness, Prevention, and Management Policy is required by the State of Maryland to give all DHS staff a course of action to take in extreme heat conditions where the potential exposure to temperatures equal or exceed 80 degrees Fahrenheit in workplace environments. This Policy and Plan is to be used with area office Operational Contingency Plans to address specific influences and responses to excessive heat related events that impact workplace operations. Management should check external agency <a href="#">resources</a> in Statewide emergencies impacting this policy to evaluate appropriate action. All DHS employees, interns, volunteers, contractors, and temporary staff who work in DHS environments at risk for High heat exposure should:
<b>Required Actions:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Monitor both outdoor and indoor conditions for related factors that could contribute to heat stress.</li></ol>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Plan for outdoor work actions during the cooler periods of the day, whenever feasible.</li> <li>3. Measure the temperature in buildings that lack sufficient ventilation.</li> <li>4. Ensure access to water to stay well hydrated and take regular breaks.</li> <li>5. Monitor yourself for signs of heat stress illness.</li> <li>6. Call 911 for assistance in emergent situations</li> <li>7. Take the mandatory DHS Heat Stress Learning Series once per year and after emergency heat related incidents.</li> </ol>
<b>Key Words:</b>	Heat Stress, Heat Exhaustion, Heat Stroke, Acclimatization
<b>Related Federal Law</b>	<p><b>Occupational Safety and Health Act (<a href="#">OSH Act</a>) of 1970, <a href="#">General Duty Clause</a></b>, Section 5(a)(1): Employers must provide a workplace “free from recognized hazards” likely to cause death or serious physical harm, including heat-related hazards.</p> <p><b>OSHA Technical Manual – <a href="#">Section III: Chapter 4 – Heat Stress</a></b>: Provides detailed guidance on evaluating and controlling heat exposure.</p> <p><b>NIOSH Criteria for a Recommended Standard: <a href="#">Occupational Exposure to Heat and Hot Environments (2016)</a></b>: Recommends preventive practices and health surveillance.</p>
<b>Related State Laws</b>	<b>Maryland Labor and Employment Article, §5-104:</b> MOSH (Maryland Occupational Safety and Health) enforces workplace safety and health, adopting OSHA standards.
<b>COMAR</b>	<p><b>Title 09, Subtitle 12 – Maryland Occupational Safety and Health (MOSH):</b>  <b>COMAR 09.12.31:</b> Adopts federal OSHA regulations regarding general industry safety and health, including environmental stressors like heat.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>COMAR 09.12.32:</b> Provides guidance regarding the appropriate implementation of the heat stress regulations.</li> </ul>

<b>State Plan Implications?</b>	Yes, per <a href="#">Maryland State Requirements and Standards</a>
<b>Related Documents</b>	<a href="#">DHS Heat Illness Prevention and Management Plan</a> <a href="#">Resources</a> <a href="#">Heat Illness Prevention Training in Workday Learning</a>

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to safeguard all DHS employees, contractors, and volunteers whose employment activities, indoor or outdoor, expose employees to a heat index in the area where the employee is working that equals or exceeds 80 degrees Fahrenheit, by establishing guidance for preventing, identifying, and responding to heat-related illnesses in compliance with state and federal laws and best practices.

This policy supports DHS' efforts to specify its employee Heat Stress safety standards via an established agency-specific process to include:

- A Heat-Related Illness Standard Prevention and Management Plan
- Acclimatization process awareness
- Safe guidance for employees
- No cost drinking water provision to at risk and exposed employees.
- High heat procedures and an emergency response plan.
- Heat stress training to employees and supervisors prior to first exposure and annual employee retraining opportunities.

## **Overview**

The Maryland Department of Human Services aims to keep employees updated in all statewide efforts to support safe workplaces.

Heat-related illness has been acknowledged as a workplace hazard. Understanding heat stress can help ensure safety when working in hot conditions.

Workers exposed to extreme heat environments face risks of possible heat stress that can lead to various occupational illnesses and injuries; such as heat stroke, exhaustion, cramps, and rashes. Hot work environments can also increase the risk of accidents due to sweaty palms, fogged safety glasses, and dizziness. Steam and hot surfaces present in extreme heat environments can lead to contact burns..

While the majority of the work DHS performs does not typically subject its employees to heat related illness, those particularly vulnerable are Facility Managers, Property Managers, Case Workers, Social Workers, and Home Health Care workers . This standard intends to raise the awareness of all DHS staff members in attempts to prevent any possible illness from intense heat exposure and to support optimal employee health.

Workers over 65, overweight individuals, those with heart disease or high blood pressure, and those on medications or are sensitive to heat are at greater risk. DHS is committed to train workers on recognizing, preventing, and managing heat stress to safeguard their health and safety.

Maryland's heat stress standard, [COMAR 09.12.32](#) went into effect September 30, 2024. The standard applies to all workplaces where the heat index is 80° F or higher.

The information below should provide all DHS staff general understanding of heat related illness and clarify the steps to take should you or a colleague experience symptoms.

The Maryland Occupational Safety and Health Administration ([MOSH](#)) continues to work on developing additional resources and guidance documents aimed for the best up to date awareness. This standard includes links to those resources for direct access to related updates.

## **Definitions**

**Heat Stress:** The overall heat load on the body occurring from a combination of effects from environmental factors, physical activity, and clothing worn.

**Heat Exhaustion:** A condition marked by heavy sweating, weakness, and confusion and often a pre-condition of heat stroke.

**Heat Stroke:** A life-threatening condition characterized by a body temperature >104°F, confusion, cramps and unconsciousness.

**Heat Index:** The temperature feels like to the human body when relative humidity is combined with the air temperature.

**Heat Syncope** (Heat Fainting) Heat syncope is characterized by fainting or dizziness, often occurring after prolonged standing or quickly standing up from a sitting or lying position. Dehydration and lack of acclimatization can contribute to this condition.

**Acclimatization:** The body's temporary adaptation to work in heat that occurs as a person is exposed to intense heat over time.

**Chesapeake Employers** (formerly known as IWIF)- is the third-party administrator of benefits for State of Maryland employees who incur work-related accidental injuries and/or occupational diseases.

**Maryland Occupational Safety and Health (MOSH)** is a division of the Maryland Department of Health responsible for ensuring workplace safety and health across the state.

**Maryland Department of Labor (MD Labor)** is a state agency that oversees workplace safety, employment services, unemployment insurance, and professional licensing. It supports workers, protects workplaces, and helps businesses and job seekers across the state.

**Origami Risk** is an online automated platform used by Chesapeake Employers to process and manage claims, track risk data, improve workflow efficiency, and support workplace safety initiatives. It helps streamline the insurance process and improve decision-making.

**Risk Management Coordinator** is responsible for supporting workplace safety, injury prevention by coordinating the reporting, investigation, and follow-up of incidents and insurance claims. They serve as a liaison between employees, supervisors, and insurance providers to ensure proper claim handling and risk mitigation.

## **Heat Stress Signs, Factors and Conditions**

**Heat-related stress** occurs when the **body struggles to regulate its core body temperature due to high heat exposure.**

**Excessive Heat Exposure:** A condition in which the body is exposed to prolonged high temperatures, from the environment, physical exertion or a combination of related factors, where the face can appear flushed, the body can be overcome with immediate exhaustion, cramps, nausea, dizziness or a general unwell feeling.

**Metabolic Heat Production:** Physical activity generates internal heat, which can present an overall unwell feeling, even if you don't feel hot, adding to stress on the body.

**Sweating & Evaporation:** The body's attempt to cool itself by sweating. Evaporation of sweat helps dissipate heat in the body. A body in heat related stress struggles to correct the overheating and goes into distress.

**Flushed Face and Skin:** The body adjusts blood flow to the skin by dilating blood vessels to help aid heat dissipation and detection of heat-related stress.

**Dehydration:** Excessive sweating leads to fluid and electrolyte loss, placing the body at risk by reducing the body's ability to cool itself down.

## **Treatment**

- **Move out of the heat** and into a shady or air-conditioned location.
- **Lay down** and raise the legs and feet slightly.
- **Remove tight or heavy clothing.**
- **Apply a cool towel** at the base of the head and around the shoulders.
- **Sip chilled water**, a sports drink containing electrolytes, or another caffeine free , non-alcoholic beverage.
- **Choose lightly salted liquids** when cramps are present.

## **◆ CALL 911 F. A. S. T. ◆**

**When** intense heat causes fainting, the need to vomit or **signs of Heat Stroke** become present, remember the acronym **F. A. S. T** for quick awareness and response:

**Face** movements change or become weak on one side.

**Arms** drop and weaken.

**Speech** and understanding become difficult.

**Time** is of the essence. Call 911 if any of these symptoms are observed.

## **Long-Term Health Effects of Heat Stress**

**Cardiovascular Issues:** Prolonged exposure to high temperatures without breaks can strain the heart, increasing the risk of heart disease and hypertension.

**Kidney Damage:** Chronic dehydration from heat stress can lead to kidney dysfunction and, therefore, an increase in the risk of kidney disease.

**Neurological Effects:** Heat stroke can cause lasting cognitive and motor impairments.

**Mental Health Effects:** Heat waves have been linked to increased anxiety, mood disorders, and even schizophrenia-related conditions.

## **Prevention**

Closely monitor yourself and your co-workers for signs of heat related illness. Be aware and avoid long periods of direct sunlight in hot conditions. Use cooling fans to keep air circulating in hot work environments to support the body's natural cooling process.

Wear lightweight, light-colored and loose-fitting breathable clothes to aid in heat dissipation when working in warm and humid environments.

Keep hydrated by drinking non-caffeinated fluids. Caffeine's diuretic effects increase the speed at which fluids move through the body. Drinking water or other electrolyte products throughout the day is best. Never wait until you feel thirsty to start hydrating – you are well on your way to becoming dehydrated when you feel thirsty.

Participate in the mandatory DHS Risk Management annual heat stress training before hot outdoor work begins for the best understanding and awareness:

## **DHS Heat Stress Standard Training**

DHS has developed a required **Heat Stress Standard Training** series for all DHS employees and supervisors to become adequately informed of all Heat Stress regulations to:

1. Promote staff engagement surrounding exposure to high heat; and
2. Re-train employees and supervisors at least annually prior to exposure, and immediately following any incident at the worksite involving a suspected or confirmed heat-related illness.
3. Present training in a language and manner that all employees and supervisors can understand.

Managers shall ensure that training includes at least:

- a. The work and environmental conditions that affect heat illness;
- b. The personal risk factors that affect heat illness;
- c. The concept, importance, and methods of acclimatization;
- d. The importance of frequent consumption of water and rest breaks in preventing heat-related illness;

- e. The types of heat illnesses, signs and symptoms of heat illnesses, and the appropriate first aid and emergency response measures;
- f. The importance of and procedures for employees immediately reporting to the employer signs and symptoms of heat illness; and
- g. The employer's procedures and the requirements for complying with [Chapter 32, the Heat Stress Standards](#).

DHS Risk Management will maintain training records for one year from the date on which the training occurred.

The required training records must include:

1. the names of the individuals trained;
2. the dates of the training sessions; and
3. a summary or outline of the content of the training sessions.

The training records shall be made available to MOSH upon request.

Additional information is available on the Maryland Department of Labor's website (*See reference links attached to this standard*). Should there be any questions regarding these requirements or their implementation, please contact the Maryland Department of Budget and Management, Employee and Labor Relations Division.

\*These regulations exclude emergency operations and essential services staff

## **Before Processing a Claim**

**In a heat related situation the first thing to do is call 911, then call the employee's emergency contact.**

### **Remember:**

#### **◆ CALL 911 F. A. S. T. ◆**

**When** intense heat causes fainting, the need to vomit or **signs of a Heat Stroke** become present, remember the acronym **F. A. S. T** for quick awareness and response:

**Face** movements change or become weak on one side.

**Arms** drop and weaken



**Speech** and understanding become difficult

**Time is critical** when these symptoms are observed

## **Process the Claim**

### **\*Report all work-related illness Incidents Immediately\***

All injuries and illnesses **MUST be reported to Chesapeake Employers' Insurance Company (formerly known as IWIF) within three (3) business days** by the employee or supervisor. If an employee is incapacitated or unable to submit the claim within the 3 day timeframe, a supervisor may begin the claim process over the phone on behalf of the staff member. The supervisor will not be able to submit the claim in full without access to the staff member's Personally Identifiable Information (PII), but they will be able to get a claim number for the employee to continue submitting the claim once able. This claim number will be provided by the supervisor to the staff member and/or their designated contact via electronic delivery method.

- **It is the responsibility of the supervisor to contact the staff member's emergency contact. Emergency contact information should be found in Workday.**
- If the staff member remains incapacitated and cannot continue the claim process, their emergency contact is able to do so. In order for the emergency contact to continue the claim process, the supervisor will provide the emergency contact with the claim number to call Chesapeake Employer Insurance.

***(Failure to report in a timely manner may result in the financial responsibility falling on the injured employee.)***

## **How to Submit the Claim or Report an Incident**

### **Reporting for a colleague experiencing a Heat related incident:**

- Call Chesapeake Employee Insurance (formerly IWIF) at **1-888-410-1400** to speak to a Chesapeake Employee Insurance call center representative who will take all required claim information.

- The employee will receive a follow up call by a Chesapeake Insurance adjuster and a DHS Risk Management coordinator within 24 business hours

### **Self Reporting:**

- The employee may choose one of the following methods to file their own claim and report their incident:
  1. Call Chesapeake Employee Insurance (*formerly IWIF*) at **1-888-410-1400** to speak to a Chesapeake Employee Insurance call center representative who will take all their required claim information.
    - The employee will receive a follow up call by a Chesapeake Insurance adjuster and a DHS Risk Management coordinator within 24 business hours
  2. Or file an online claim via the Origami System with **[Chesapeake Employee Insurance](#)**

### **Online Claim Submissions are only for Self reporting of Incidents :**

Click on this link <https://bit.ly/IWIFDHSFROI> or copy and paste it into your browser

1. Once here, click on the "Submit a New Incident" button (located at the bottom of the page).
2. Complete all required fields (marked with a red asterisk "\*").
3. Once all information is entered, select "Complete Incident" (located at the top of the page) to finalize the submission.
4. Your claim has then been submitted to Chesapeake Employee Insurance.
5. You will receive a claim number on your screen when you submit the claim . Write it down for future reference. This claim number will help you and the adjuster to update additional information to continue to process the claim for payment. If a staff member loses their claim number, they may call Chesapeake Employers Insurance 800 number for this information.

6. The employee will receive a follow up call by a Chesapeake Insurance adjuster and a DHS Risk Management coordinator within 24 business hours.
7. **DHS Risk Management** staff will follow up with the employee, supervisor, witness and **Chesapeake Employers' Insurance** within 24 business hours after a claim is submitted. The **Risk Management Coordinator** may request additional information from any involved party to support the processing of the claim. Chesapeake Insurance adjuster will contact the employee for additional information (ie - RX, physical therapy, doctors visit, etc.), to continue processing the claim.
8. The claims adjuster will guide you through the process and be your main point of contact.
9. If you have any **questions, concerns, or need assistance**, on leave usage please contact your local risk management coordinators and or central **DHS Risk Management** Coordinator directly.

***DHS Risk Management***

25 S. Charles Street, 17th Floor

Baltimore, MD 21201

Email: [riskmanagement.central@maryland.gov](mailto:riskmanagement.central@maryland.gov)

## **Record-Keeping Process**

### **1. Injury Oversight:**

- **DHS Risk Management** will oversee all heat stress-related injury reports submitted through the Origami Risk Management system via the submitted claims.

### **2. Quarterly Reporting:**

- **Chesapeake Employers' Insurance (formerly IWIF)** is responsible for reporting all claims and workplace injuries (i.e. Heat Stress Related Injuries) to the Maryland Department of Labor on a quarterly basis.

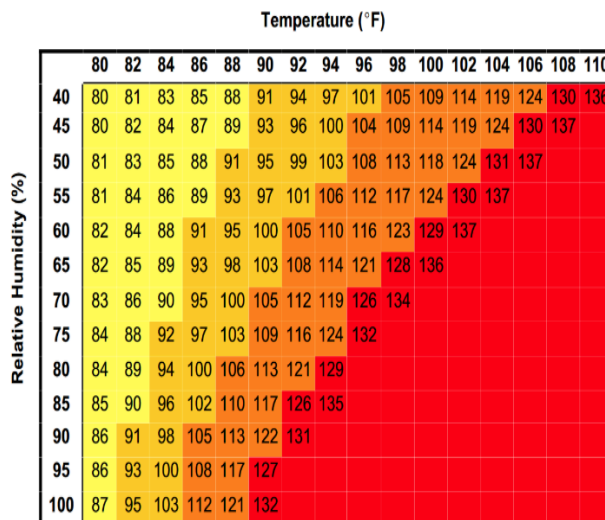
### **3. Annual Reporting:**

- **DHS Risk Management** is responsible for submitting an annual year-end summary of work-related injuries and illnesses to the Maryland Department of Labor, in compliance with OSHA

reporting requirements.

#### 4. Training Records:

- **The DHS Office of Learning** will track and maintain documentation of all heat stress training provided to employees and supervisors. These records must be made available to MOSH upon request.



#### Likelihood of Heat Disorders with Prolonged Exposure and/or Strenuous Activity

■ Caution ■ Extreme Caution ■ Danger ■ Extreme Danger

National Weather Service Heat Index

[Download Image](#)

How to read the chart: Look for the temperature across the top, then find the relative humidity on the left.

The point where they intersect on the chart tells you the Heat Index, color-coded by likelihood of a heat disorder. For example, look at an air temperature of 100°F (38°C) and Relative Humidity of 40%. The chart shows the Heat Index - how hot it feels - as 109°F (43°C), which is in the orange range for DANGER.

## Resources