

# Warm weather working

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*Drink plenty of cool water and keep hydrated. Your company should make sure that you are provided with sufficient drinking water.*

*Report any symptoms of heat stroke, exhaustion or burning to your supervisor or on-site first aider.*

## (You never know, it could happen)

Now we are well in to what shall optimistically be referred to as spring/summer, we are starting to think about those nice warm days and heady temperatures of above 17°C.

I jest, but warmer weather is on the way and the Diggers' Forum committee thought it was about time we put together a few handy hints and tips to help get through the summer (both weeks of it).

Your employer should have a risk assessment for working in warm weather, make sure you are talking to your project management about any adaptations that could be made to keep you and your colleagues safe, for example, is your PPE suitable for the task you are undertaking?

As outdoor workers Diggers are exposed to high temperatures for long periods, and are at a higher than average risk of overexposure to UV radiation. Along with those ridiculous tan lines, this can lead to **heat stroke**, **heat exhaustion**, and of course, **skin damage** which in turn can lead to an increased risk of **skin cancer**.

So, on that jolly note why not try to:

Reschedule work for **cooler times of the day**, such as earlier in the morning or later in the afternoon when levels of UVR are less intense. Try to stay out of the sun during the hottest part of the day. We know that this is in fact an entirely ridiculous notion, alternatively, try to rotate between indoor/shaded and outdoor tasks to minimise exposure.

Wear **sunscreen**. Ideally this should be of a high factor and re-applied regularly. In an ideal world your employer would provide a generic brand of sunscreen, and some do. However, it is important to acknowledge that individuals could have a variety of skin allergies and other requirements which could make this impractical. All things considered it's perhaps just best to bring your own.

**Cover up.** Yes, no one likes to wear long sleeves, and yes it is hot, but there is nothing sexy about cancer, and you do know that long-term sun exposure speeds up the skin's ageing process, right? Dry and wrinkled skin? Nice.

Drink plenty of cool **water** and keep hydrated. Your company should make sure that you are provided with sufficient drinking water.

If you're baking, the ground is too and prolonged mattocking is likely to lead to injury and contribute to **Repetitive Strain Injury**. And remember heat stroke is more likely when heavy physical work is being done, so pace your work rate.

**Heat exhaustion** is caused by the loss of salt and water from the body by excessive sweating. Left untreated it can lead to heat stroke so it is important to take care of yourself. Signs to look out for are:

- Headache, dizziness and confusion
- Loss of appetite and nausea
- Sweating, with pale, clammy skin
- Cramps in the arms, legs or abdomen

**Heat stroke** is the most severe form of heat-related conditions, and is caused by the failure of the body to regulate temperature, resulting in the body becoming dangerously overheated. Symptoms include:

- Headache, dizziness and discomfort
- Restlessness and confusion
- Hot, flushed and dry skin
- Body temperature of above 40°C

Take **extra rest breaks**, whenever you feel you need one (but don't take the piss), and make sure there is shade in rest areas, **remove PPE when resting** to help encourage heat loss, and clothing (including PPE) should ideally not be tight or restricting, it should allow body heat to escape.

**Report any symptoms of heat stroke/exhaustion/burning to your supervisor or on-site first aider.**

Useful links:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/temperature/thermal/managers.htm>

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/temperature/outdoor.htm>

[www.sunsafeworkplaces.co.uk](http://www.sunsafeworkplaces.co.uk)

