

EMPLOYEE SAFETY NEWSLETTER

August 2018

Symptoms of heat illnesses

Illnesses that can be brought on by exposure to extreme heat include heatstroke, heat exhaustion, heat syncope, heat cramps, heat rashes, and rhabdomyolysis, a medical condition associated with heat stress that is the rapid breakdown and death of muscle. Outdoor workers and workers in hot environments are at risk of heat illnesses.

Symptoms of heat illnesses can be difficult to recognize, even for those who are experiencing them. If you or a coworker experiences any of these signs or symptoms, seek out your supervisor right away and get medical assistance.

Heatstroke—Confusion, altered mental status; slurred speech; loss of consciousness; hot, dry skin or profuse sweating; seizures; and a very high body temperature. **Important!** Heatstroke can be fatal.

Heat exhaustion—Headache, nausea, dizziness, weakness, irritability, thirst, heavy sweating, elevated body temperature, and decreased urine output.

Heat syncope—Fainting (short duration), dizziness, or light-headedness during prolonged standing or suddenly rising from a sitting or lying position.

Heat cramps—Muscle cramps, pain, or spasms in the abdomen, arms, or legs.

Heat rash—Looks like a red cluster of pimples or small blisters and usually appears on the neck, upper chest, groin, under the breasts, and in elbow creases.

Rhabdomyolysis—Muscle cramps/pain, abnormally dark (tea or cola colored) urine, weakness, or exercise intolerance. This condition can also be asymptomatic (show no symptoms).



Never leave battery-powered tools outdoors unattended.

Working with battery-operated power tools

How to use them safely

Battery-powered tools, such as cordless drills, saws, screwdrivers, and more, are convenient both on the job and at home. They allow you the flexibility to work in areas where running an electrical cord would be difficult or impossible, and they avoid the mess and fumes that gasoline-powered tools can create. But battery-operated tools are not without hazards.

Tool hazards and safe work practices

The tool itself can be hazardous. In this respect, battery-powered tools are just like any other power tool in the dangers they pose. A cordless saw is still a saw with a sharp blade. Regardless of what kind of tool you're using, make sure you understand and follow the manufacturer's guidelines for safe use, and always wear the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE). The specific PPE you'll need varies depending on the kind of tool you're using. Ask your supervisor if you aren't sure what PPE a particular tool requires. Follow these safe work practices:

- Keep your hands away from moving or rotating parts at all times.
- Never use cordless tools near open flames, in an explosive atmosphere, or near flammable liquids.
- Never leave tools outdoors unattended.
- Don't wear loose clothing or jewelry when using a power tool, and keep long hair tied back.
- When a tool is not being used, or when it's being adjusted or cleaned, remove the battery or lock the power switch in the off position to prevent injuries from accidental start-up.
- Never use a tool for a purpose for which it was not intended.

Battery safety

The tool's battery can also present hazards. It's important to treat the battery pack that powers your tool with care. Use only manufacturer-approved chargers and battery packs; other battery packs could cause fire or explosion. Check the battery pack for damage each time you use the tool. If a battery pack or charger has been dropped, hit, or damaged, do not use it.

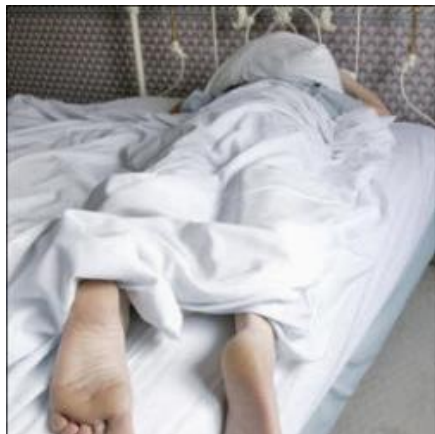
Damaged battery packs can leak chemicals that can cause burns. If you get these chemicals on your skin, flush the area with water promptly. Seek medical attention if you get battery liquid in your eyes or if it is ingested. Don't place battery packs near fire or heat, and store them away from moisture, including excess humidity. Charge battery packs in a cool, dry location away from combustible materials. When the battery is not in use, keep it away from metal and other conductive materials. In particular, small metal objects like paper clips, nails, screws, and coins can make a connection from one terminal to another and short-circuit the battery.

If a battery pack or charger is not working properly, never attempt to repair it yourself. Consult the manufacturer to find an authorized repair facility. When a battery pack reaches the end of its life, make sure to dispose of it properly. Consult the manufacturer's instructions for recycling or disposal, and follow all applicable local, state, and federal laws.

Prepare for a flood

Floods can happen during any season. However, coastal areas are at greater risk for flooding during hurricane season from June to November, and the Midwest is more at risk in the spring and during heavy summer rains. Wherever you are located, you should be prepared to evacuate if a flood strikes your area. If a flood watch or warning is issued in your area, you should:

- Fill your vehicle's gas tank and make sure the emergency kit for your car is ready.
- Make arrangements with friends or family for transportation if you do not have a vehicle available to evacuate.
- Place essential documents such as medical records, birth certificates, insurance cards, and ID cards in waterproof materials to carry with you during evacuation.
- Fill containers with clean water.
- If you have a pet, find a safe shelter designated for pets.
- Review your emergency plans and supplies, and check to see if any items are missing.
- Tune in to the radio or television for weather updates.
- Listen for disaster sirens and warning signals.
- Put livestock and family pets in a safe area. Due to food and sanitation requirements, emergency shelters do not accept animals.
- Adjust the thermostat on refrigerators and freezers to the coolest possible temperature.



Working with battery-operated power tools: Quiz

Choose the correct response to the following statements.

1. It's usually safe to use a cordless power tool near fire. **True or False**
2. Wearing loose clothing is recommended when working with power tools in general. **True or False**
3. You do NOT need to remove the cordless power tool's battery or lock the power switch in the off position if:
 - A. The tool is being adjusted or cleaned.
 - B. The tool is not currently needed for the task.
 - C. The tool is being used to complete a task.
4. Damaged battery packs are typically OK to handle safely. **True or False**
5. Keep battery packs away from metals and other conductive materials. **True or False**

Answers

1. False. You should never use cordless tools near open flames, in an explosive atmosphere, or near flammable liquids. **2. False.** Wear clothing that is tight to your body and not loose. Do not wear loose jewelry, and make sure to keep long hair tied back. This will reduce risk of injury when using the power tool. **3. C. The tool is being used to complete a task.** Remove the battery or turn the power switch to the off position to prevent injuries from accidental start-up if the tool is not in use or if it is being adjusted or cleaned. **4. False.** Damaged battery packs can leak chemicals that can burn you. Flush any areas where the chemicals touch your skin with water immediately. **5. True.** When the battery is not in use, keep it away from metal and other conductive materials, including small metal objects like paper clips and nails. These can make a connection from one terminal to another and short-circuit the battery.

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Night shift: Feeling the fatigue

Almost one-quarter of American workers spend more than 40 hours per week at work, and nearly 15 million American workers have full-time evening, night, rotating, or other irregular shifts, according to OSHA. Long work hours can result in high levels of stress, poor eating habits, lack of physical activity, and illness. Working night shifts make it difficult to get enough sleep. Sleep after night work is typically shorter and not as refreshing. Here are some helpful sleep tips for nightshift workers.

Identify a sleep schedule. Keep a record or a journal of the time you go to sleep, when you wake up, and how rested you feel. A record will help you identify a sleep schedule that works for you.

Have more than one "sleep period." Many workers need a combination of two shorter sleep periods to get enough sleep after the night shift. Get to bed as close to the end of your shift as possible to maximize your sleep time.

If you can't sleep, at least rest. Just resting or relaxing is not enough in terms of taming fatigue. Your mind must have sleep. Though rest can still be valuable for body and muscle recovery, you should schedule for at least 7 hours of time in bed, even if you don't sleep the whole time.

Take a nap. Shiftworkers, especially nightshift workers, tend to nap frequently. When added to your regular sleep, a short afternoon or evening nap can help fight drowsiness. If it is safe and permissible to take a nap during a work break, make sure your nap is at least 20 to 30 minutes long. Shorter naps can make you sleepier.