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## **ONTARIO GOVERNMENT REMINDS WORKERS TO STAY COOL AND AVOID HEAT STRESS**

*Physical Work And Fluid Loss Can Be Dangerous During Hot Summer Season*

QUEEN'S PARK – The Ontario government is reminding employers and workers to be aware of the health and safety dangers of heat stress and to protect themselves, Labour Minister Steve Peters said today.

“Throughout the summer, we can expect more heat and humidity which can put both indoor and outdoor workers at risk,” said Peters. “We all need to be aware of the symptoms of heat stress so that we know how to work smart and stay cool.”

When heat is combined with other stresses like hard physical work, fluid loss, fatigue or some medical conditions, it can lead to heat-related illness, disability and even death. Heat stress can affect anyone, including the young and fit, and can be a concern in many workplaces. For indoor workers, major sources of heat are furnaces, bakeries, smelters, foundries and other hot equipment. For outdoor workers, direct sunlight is the main source of heat.

Symptoms of heat stress can include rashes, sunburn, cramping, fainting, excessive sweating, headache and dizziness. If you are working in a hot environment, you should drink lots of fluids to replace perspiration. Try to drink a cup of water about every 20 minutes, and when possible, try to:

- Avoid working in direct sunlight
- Reduce the pace of work
- Increase the number of breaks and take breaks in cool or shaded areas
- Schedule heavy work for cooler periods
- Wear light-coloured and/or light-weight clothing
- Reduce the physical demands of work by using aides, e.g. hoists etc.

Employers have a responsibility to take every precaution reasonable to ensure a worker is protected from heat stress. This includes developing hot environment policies and procedures. For more information, please see the ministry's Heat Stress Guideline at [www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/guidelines/gl\\_heat.html](http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/guidelines/gl_heat.html)

More information on heat stress and hot weather plans is also available from Ontario's safe workplace associations ([www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/websites.html](http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/websites.html)).

“Heat stress is an important workplace health and safety issue, especially in the summer,” said Peters. “Employers and workers should work together to ensure their workplace is safe.”

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