

The majority of Orange Sky's services and activities take place outdoors. Therefore, it is important that staff and volunteers know what to do to keep themselves and others safe while working in hot weather and hot environments. Working in hot or humid environments can be uncomfortable, but more importantly, it could lead to a *heat-related illness*, which can be fatal.

What are heat-related illnesses?

Heat-related illness is a term used to describe a range of progressive heat-related conditions including:

- Dehydration
- Fainting
- Heat rash
- Heat cramps
- Heat exhaustion
- Heatstroke

A heat-related illness can result from the following contributing factors:

- Sunshine
- High humidity
- Internal body heat (e.g. from manual work)
- Wearing multiple layers of clothing or PPE

Heat affects people differently

Heat affects people differently and is influenced by:

- One's general health
- One's body weight
- Age
- A low level of fitness
- Certain prescription drugs
- Some medical conditions (e.g. diabetes)

Most people feel comfortable between 20°C and 27°C degrees and when the humidity ranges from 35 to 60 per cent. People may feel uncomfortable when temperatures or humidity are higher than this.

However, it is important to note that such situations do not cause harm as long as the body can adjust and cope with the additional heat.

Avoiding heat stress

Avoid heat stress while on shift by:

- Drinking plenty of water throughout the shift
- Apply sunscreen before the shift begins
- Wear a hat while on shift
- Take frequent breaks in the shade
- Wear loose clothes
- Use the van's awning to create shade

IMPORTANT: If you or a team member suspects symptoms of heat-related illness, notify your Team Leader as soon as possible, seek first aid treatment or call emergency services on AU) 000 or NZ) 111 and complete an Incident Report.

For further information on working safely in heat utilise the following resources:

- *Cancer Council SunSmart App* (available in the Android and Apple app stores)
- AU: [Healthdirect - Heatstroke](#)
- NZ: [Heat stroke and heat exhaustion](#)