Beat the Heat! Top 5 Summer Hazards



When summertime rolls around, it’s easy to forget that even the clearest weather and sunshine can create hazards when working outdoors. If you find yourself working alone outside, you’ll need to take extra precautions as any potential problems are made worse when you’re away from help. In this list we’ll be looking at some of the most common risks of working outdoors in the summer, and some of the ways that you can help protect yourself.

1. **SUN AND HEAT**

Risks from sun and heat include sun stroke, dehydration, and sun burns. To avoid burning, apply sunscreen at least 30 minutes before exposure, and reapply throughout the day to maintain your protection. When heat poses a danger to you, make sure that you stay hydrated, and take breaks in the shade whenever possible.

2. **POOR AIR QUALITY**

During the summer, air quality can be decreased by environmental factors like allergens, dust, and debris. It’s especially important to consider air quality if you already suffer from a respiratory condition such as asthma. To avoid poor air quality in the summer, try to plan any trips outdoors for the coolest, driest times of the day, typically the morning or evening.

3. **EXTREME WEATHER**

Just like the winter, summer has its own extreme weather conditions, including lightning strikes and tornadoes. If you’re outdoors and you hear thunder, take shelter indoors or inside a car if possible. Lightning is more likely to strike tall objects, so when a structure isn’t available it’s recommended to take shelter in low, dry areas. To avoid lightning storms, keep an eye on the clouds and always check weather forecasts before you leave.

4. **INSECT BITES**

For some people, severe allergic reactions can occur from insect bites, so having an EpiPen available when working outdoors is a good idea. To help you avoid mosquito and insect bites that can cause skin irritation and possibly disease, bring mosquito and insect repellents. Some repellents can cause their own irritations, so make sure to always follow the label directions before applying.

5. **IRRITATING PLANTS**

If you might encounter poison ivy and other irritating plants like poison oak, the best preventative measure is to learn to identify these plants and avoid them. If avoiding areas with these plants isn’t possible, closed-toe shoes, long sleeves, pants, and gloves can all protect your skin from these plant’s oils. If your clothing does come into contact with these plants, wash the clothing thoroughly to avoid second-hand reactions.

Conclusion

Working outdoors at any time presents new challenges and hazards, so take the time to consider the environment around you this summer. Working alone increases the danger from any environmental risk factor, so be sure that if you’re working alone this summer, you’re following good safety practices.

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