

Policy No:	WHS-03
Council Resolution Ref:	RESOLUTION 286/23
Date Adopted:	November 2023
Review Date:	31/10/2026
Version No:	2.0
Responsible Officer:	WHSA

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to all workers, volunteers, and contractors of the Murweh Shire Council (MSC) when working in the heat, to understand the health implications of working in extreme conditions, and to implement control measures when required.

Commencement of Policy

This Policy will commence on adoption by Council. It replaces all other policies (whether written or not).

Application

This policy applies to employees of Murweh Shire Council. It does not form part of any employee's contract of employment.

Policy

IDENTIFYING HEAT STRESS RISKS

Working in heat may be a result of working outdoors in hot weather or where heat is generated as part of a work activity. People who work indoors or do light work are unlikely to suffer from heat stress and any discomfort caused by increased temperatures can be managed by:

- increasing air movement
- Provide air conditioning (where practical);
- providing access to cool water; and
- wearing suitable loose-fitting clothing.

Workers involved in manual activities conducted outdoors are at greater risk of developing heat stress. When identifying who is at risk, the type of workload must be identified.

Heavy Workload

1. Manual work involving repetition and the use of very high force such as digging, jackhammering, sawing, shovelling, etc
2. Manual work involving the use of chainsaws, blowtorches, etc.
3. Physical work such as concreting, spraying, laying pipes, etc.

Medium Workload

1. Manual work where machinery can be utilised limiting physical exertion such as lawn mowing, forklift operation, backhoe operation, line marking, etc.

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Light Workload

1. manual work or supervisory work requiring very little physical exertion such as preparing signs, inspections etc.
2. work that can be relocated indoors such as cleaning workspaces or amenities, bookwork.

HEAT STRESS MANAGEMENT PLAN

To minimise the effects of hot weather on workers and the Council's work program, management and supervisors must monitor expected weather conditions and plan accordingly.

Responsibilities

Temperatures will be monitored by the relevant manager or supervisor during hot days with reference to the Bureau of Meteorology forecasts, to ascertain the predicted temperatures scheduled over the working week. The manager or supervisor will then make any necessary arrangements to reduce the risks to workers.

Workers are responsible for advising managers or supervisors of conditions that may increase the risk of heat stress. Management of heat stress is a shared responsibility between management and each individual.

Personal risk factors

People respond differently to heat, and some workers may experience distress or symptoms of heat stress at lower temperatures and humidity. This may be due to several risk factors including:

- poor physical fitness.
- obesity.
- pre-existing medical conditions or treatments.
- use of medication, and/or
- chronic skin disorders

Heat stress management control measures

Actions that may influence work and measures adopted for heat stress management include the following:

- where possible, flexibility in starting times will be considered along with work programming/planning to enable the programmed works to be completed before the forecasted hottest part of the day.
- the expected duration of excessively high temperatures should be considered before the workload is programmed with alternative arrangements considered such as using plant instead of manual labour.
- workers should be reassigned to light duties as the temperature increases and subsequently when the temperature drops, heavy or medium workloads can be resumed.
- workers whose duties require them to be outside must wear protective clothing and the equipment provided. This includes wearing Council clothing (where issued), a hat, sunglasses, and sunscreen.
- all vehicles will be fitted with air-conditioning where practicable.
- additional break times will be provided.
- wherever possible, shade will be provided, or alternatively shaded areas will be identified for those staff whose duties require them to be outside.
- job rotation particularly for traffic controllers during roadworks will be made available where possible. This will allow workers an opportunity to work from air-conditioned plant for longer periods.
- Depot lunchrooms will be fitted with air-conditioning where practical or appropriate.
- drink bottles are made available for all outdoor workers. All workers have access to cool water prior to work commencing and throughout the day. For remote worksites, workers will be given the opportunity to refill their drink bottles if required, or where this is difficult, alternatives will be made available such as the provision of bottled water.

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- Hydrolyte drinks are available at the MSC Stores for supervisors to have in their first aid kits for anyone in their crew that may be under heat stress.
- information regarding working in heat and recognising the symptoms of heat stress is issued to all outdoor workers including volunteers.

Contractual/emergency obligations

All works that have commenced and have subsequently halted due to extreme temperatures/conditions, need to be completed or made safe as a minimum requirement.

In the case of an emergency situation, work shall continue. An emergency roster will be developed to ensure sufficient staff are present to enable appropriate breaks to be taken.

Audit and Review

This policy shall be reviewed every three years or as required due to changes to in legislation.

Definitions

"**Heat stress**" results when the body is unable to sufficiently cool itself enough to maintain a healthy temperature, and usually requires a combination of risk factors.

Those factors include:

- temperature.
- humidity'
- amount of air movement.
- radiant temperature of surroundings.
- clothing.
- physical activity; and
- poor health

There is no agreed temperature limit for working outdoors however, under Section 19 of the Work Health & Safety Act Council has an obligation to ensure the health & safety of workers whilst at work. If workers are suffering from any heat stress symptoms, the worker needs to immediately cease work and seek first aid.

The responsible supervisor on site must immediately commence a full review of the working environment to determine whether the illness has been caused by an increase in radiant temperature at the site. In the event any worker/s has been identified as being at risk, seek medical advice about a person's fitness for work in hot environments if you know they have predisposing medical conditions.

Where preventive action to address radiant heat hazards is not implemented and monitored, the WHS Regulation under Section 28, 40 (F), and 314, clearly identifies what penalties can be imposed if workers are placed at risk at the workplace by various types of radiant heat hazard/s impacting the work environment.

"**Workers**" A worker, in accordance with the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* is a person who carries out work in any capacity for a PCBU including work as an employee, volunteer, contractor, sub-contractor, work experience student, or trainee.

References

- *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*
- *Work Health and Safety Regulations 2017*
- *Local Government (State) Award 2020*
- *Code of Conduct*

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Version Control

Version No.	Date	Approved	Amendment
1.0	21/01/2023	WHSA	New Policy Document
2.0	31/10/2023	WHSA	Review of whole document

Approval

Chief Executive Officer		Bruce Scott	
Date:		Signature:	