

Spring Has Sprung....Summer Heat is Next

By: Robert Lahey, Construction Safety Council



The change of seasons is inevitable. So, too, is the exposure of IBEW Local 701 members to outdoor weather – from sunrise to sunset. As the days get longer, an increasing amount of time is spent in contact with harmful ultraviolet rays. Temperatures are also on the rise, soon to extreme levels more often than not.

Be prepared – before the Dog Days of Summer – to protect yourself and your co-workers. It's easier than you think. Common sense, combined with commitment, will protect employees and employers from the harsh reality of working hard and working hot in Illinois.

Be Aware

There are several types of heat-related illness: Heat Stroke, Heat Exhaustion, Heat Cramps, and Heat Rash, to name a few. More important than understanding these differences, however, is timely recognition and immediate response to these dangerous symptoms:

- Elevated body temperature
- Rapid heart rate
- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- Muscle pain
- Fatigue

When any of these conditions are present, immediate action is necessary.

Provide Relief

A straightforward response includes:

- Escort the affected individual to a shaded or air-conditioned environment.
- Remove outer layers of clothing, especially heavy PPE.
- Cool him/her down by placing ice or cold wet towels on the head, neck, and armpits.
- Do not isolate the worker - remain present to observe behaviors and reactions.

Call for Help

- Dial 9-1-1 when in any doubt, especially if there are signs of confusion or slurred speech.



In April 2026, OSHA updated its National Emphasis Program that protects workers from heat-related hazards, even in the absence of a federal standard, which is a signal for contractors to intervene with strategies that will prevent illness and death during the upcoming high-heat season.

The message is simple.

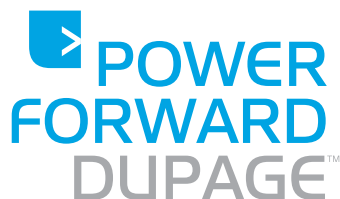


And it requires a proactive plan.

- Put it in writing and explain why it matters.
- Supervise the site – all day long – and use a “buddy system” everywhere.
- Acclimatize workers, especially new hires, with gradually-increasing exposure limits.
- Use engineering controls: ventilation fans, cooling zones, sun blockers, and water stations.
- Modify work practices: frequent training, variable work hours, and scheduled rest periods.
- Provide PPE: reflective clothing, ice vests, head coverings, and sunscreen.

Especially this summer, but also year-round, PowerForward DuPage and the Construction Safety Council are pleased to partner and provide IBEW Local 701 employees and employers with the skills they need to create safer work environments.

Robert Lahey is the President & CEO of the Construction Safety Council located in Hillside, Illinois. For more than 30 years, the Council has delivered programs and services in support of its commitment to Safe Workers – Safer Futures. To learn more about its wide range of safety training opportunities, visit www.buildsafe.org.



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The Construction Safety Council, in partnership with the NECA-IBEW 701 Safety Committee, would like to remind you to Work Smart, Build Safe!



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