



Policy

32. HEAT STRESS

Version 03

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Strategic Outcome: Good government

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Responsible Officer: Enterprise and Risk Manager

1. POLICY STATEMENT

Council acknowledges its responsibilities under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* to provide as far as reasonably practicable, a healthy and safe workplace for all Council workers, and will eliminate exposure to extreme heat or adopt control measures to minimise exposure wherever elimination is not possible.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to all staff when working in heat, to understand the health implications for working in extreme conditions, and to implement control measures when required.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies:

- To all workers of the Berrigan Shire Council including volunteers and contractors;
- Generally, to work situations involving manual activities performed outdoors, or work involving the generation of heat.

4. OBJECTIVE

This policy is designed to assist the Council to meet the following Delivery Plan objective:

2.2.2 *Council operations support ethical, transparent and accountable corporate governance.*

5. DEFINITIONS

Working in heat can be as a result of working outdoors in hot weather or where heat is generated as part of a work activity. Heat stress results when the body is unable to sufficiently cool itself and usually requires a combination of risk factors.



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Those factors include:

- Temperature
- Humidity
- Amount of air movement
- Radiant temperature of surroundings
- Clothing
- Physical activity
- Poor health

Heat discomfort is what many people feel when it is hot. It is not a medical condition like heat stress and therefore is not considered a risk to health.

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
- Providing air conditioning (where practical)
- Providing access to cool water
- Wearing suitable loose fitting clothing

Workers involved in manual activities conducted outdoors are at greater risk of developing heat stress.

Workload types:

Workloads		
Heavy	Medium	Light
Manual work involving repetition and the use of very high force such as digging, jack-hammering, sawing, shoveling, etc.	Manual work where machinery can be utilised limiting physical exertion such as lawn mowing, forklift operation, backhoe operation, line marking, etc.	Manual work or supervisory work requiring very little physical exertion such as litter collection, preparing signs, lifeguard operations, inspection and testing regimes.
Manual work involving the use of spark-creating equipment such as chainsaws, blow torches, pneumatic equipment, concrete saws, etc.		
Physical work such as concreting, spraying, laying pipes, etc.		Work that can be relocated to indoors, such as cleaning workspaces or amenities, bookwork, etc.

The key to effective management of heat stress is to plan in advance giving consideration to expected weather conditions, rather than reacting to weather conditions as they occur.



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

6. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

6.1 Responsibilities

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

The Director Corporate Services will ensure that lifeguards and S355 Committees of Council are adequately informed of Council procedures for working in extreme conditions.

Workers are responsible for advising Managers or Overseers of conditions that may increase the risk of heat stress.

Management of heat stress is a shared responsibility between management and each individual.

6.2 Temperature Monitoring and Risk Management

Outdoor temperatures and relative humidity in the Berrigan Shire vary significantly. Extra care must be taken on extremely hot days and on days where humidity is high.

These guidelines are in place to assist Managers/Overseers in assessing workloads against forecasted temperatures and conditions, to program work and decide upon control measures to be adopted, to reduce the risk of heat stress on workers.

When temperatures are forecast to reach or exceed 40°C, Managers/Overseers will consult with workers involved in heavy or medium manual work, at various forums such as Tool Box Meetings and Site Meetings, to set break times, and discuss additional measures if required. Measures to be implemented will be documented on the Site Specific Risk Assessment/Tool Box Meeting record, signed by relevant workers, and included on Safe Work Method Statements.

Works are not permitted to proceed on a day where the temperature is predicted to reach or exceed 40°C without the Site Specific Risk Assessment/Tool Box Meeting record completed, addressing additional control measures, and signed by all workers.

6.3 Personal Risk Factors

People respond differently to heat, and some workers may experience distress or symptoms of heat stress at temperatures less than 40°C.



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This can be due to a number of risk factors including:

- Poor physical fitness
- Obesity
- Pre-existing medical conditions or treatments
- Use of medication
- Chronic skin disorders

Under these circumstances, workers are encouraged to speak with their Manager, Overseer or Ganger to arrange additional or alternative measures.

The table below is a reference to determine actions:

Control Measure	Temp. °C
Standard Operating Procedures in place. Employees who are at risk are required to discuss their individual circumstances with their Manager, Overseer or Ganger.	Up to 40°C
Heat Stress identified on Site Specific Risk Assessment, with additional control measures discussed and documented on the Tool Box Meeting Record.	40°C and above

This table is indicative only as other variables can have a significant effect on an individual including exposure to additional heat sources such as machinery, and bituminous work.

Operators of air-conditioned plant or equipment and staff working in air-conditioned buildings are exempt from increased break times or inclusion in the Heat Stress Management Plan.

6.4 Heat Stress Management

The Tool Box Meeting Record will outline additional control measures to be implemented to manage heat stress.

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

- a) Where possible, flexibility in starting times and work programming/planning is to be considered to enable the programmed works to be completed before the forecast hottest part of the day and prior to the temperature reaching 40°C;
- b) 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;
- c) Employees should be relocated to duties of a light workload as the temperature increases and subsequently when the temperature drops, heavy or medium duties can be resumed;



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- d) Employees whose duties require them to be outside are required to wear the protective clothing and equipment provided. This includes the wearing of Council issued clothing, hat, sunglasses and sunscreen;
- e) All vehicles will be fitted with air-conditioning where practicable;
- f) Additional break times will be provided;
- g) Wherever possible, shade will be provided or alternatively shaded areas will be identified for those staff whose duties require them to be outside;
- h) 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;
- i) Depot lunch rooms will be fitted with air-conditioning where practical or appropriate;
- j) Drink bottles are made available for all outdoor workers. All workers have access to cool water prior to works 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;
- k) Information regarding working in heat, and recognising the symptoms of heat stress is issued to all outdoor workers including volunteers.

6.5 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 meeting emergency situation requirements in accordance with the specification, works shall continue. An emergency roster will be developed to ensure sufficient staff are present to enable appropriate breaks to be taken.

7. RELATED LEGISLATION, POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

7.1 Legislation

- *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*
- *Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011*

7.2 Policies and Strategies

- Local Government (State) Award 2010
- Work Health and Safety Policy
- Clothing and Protective Equipment Policy