



# WORK RIGHT REVIEW

VOLUME 8 | ISSUE 26 | ARCHIVE [WORKRIGHTNW.COM](http://WORKRIGHTNW.COM)



## THE HEAT IS ON! DEALING WITH HEAT STROKE

BY MIRANDA  
ZAMORA-WILLIAMS



**Heat stroke** is a life-threatening condition which occurs when the body's core temperature rises above 40°C (104°F). It occurs when the body can't cool itself adequately through sweating and evaporative cooling. This may be due to humidity, heavy clothing, or heavy equipment. As body temperatures continue to rise, it causes injury to the organs and can result in death if quick action is not taken.

### How to Deal With Heat Stroke

In athletic settings, cold water immersion (CWI) is the gold standard for treatment of heat stroke. The goal is to cool as aggressively as possible to reduce body temperature to less than 38.9°C (102°F) within 30 minutes of collapse. CWI is not common practice in the industrial setting, but is easily implemented with the following considerations!

#### Assessment

- A core temperature of >40°C (104°F) is a sign of heat stroke.
  - Rectal temperature is the best gauge for assessment of core temperature
  - If no rectal thermometer is available, but heat stroke is suspected, CWI is still indicated.



#### Why Cool 1st - Transport 2nd?

- TIME! *Immediate onsite cooling avoids delays in cooling when every minute counts.*
- Aggressive cooling is needed to reduce body temperature to 38.9°C *before transport.*
- This is often in disagreement with EMS protocols so discussions with local EMS prior to implementation are encouraged.

#### Best Cooling Options

- A 50-100 gallon plastic tub is an ideal cooling vessel
  - A water temperature of 10°C (50°F) is ideal.
- A body bag or tarp can also be used if no tub is available.
- CWI is the gold standard, but if the above options are not available, a cold\_shower cooling is recommended while awaiting EMS transport.

WANT TO READ MORE?  
SCAN THE QR!

Work Right NW is changing the way that companies view workplace hazards. Our focus is on educating the workforce to prevent injury. We provide access to Injury Prevention Specialist's in the workplace to address the early signs of discomfort. We are changing the industry one company at a time by helping one person at a time.

