

# VICTORIA UNIVERSITY HEALTH AND SAFETY PROCEDURE

**Date of Issue:** July 7, 2023

**Review/Revise Date:**

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## HEAT STRESS / COLD STRESS PROGRAM

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### PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to outline the general procedure for heat and cold stress.

### SCOPE

This procedure applies to all employees of Victoria University

### STANDARDS/PROCEDURES

Heat Stress - Working in a hot environment puts stress on your body's cooling system; combining this with other stresses such as hard physical work, loss of fluids, fatigue or some medical conditions, may lead to heat-related illness, disability and even death.

Cold Stress – Working in a cold environment puts stress on the body's heating system; a cold environment can lower the body's inner temperature, causing extremities of body parts to freeze.

#### Heat/Cold Stress Identification

- Tasks (includes indoor and outdoor work, routine and non-routine work) with the potential to cause heat/cold stress will be identified as part of the hazard assessment process. These tasks will then be further evaluated to determine if risks are significant and if heat/cold controls are required
- Heat/cold hazards will also be identified through employee
- The heat/cold stressors will be compared to Ministry standards, industry best practices, and professional standards (ACGIH) to determine if controls are needed

#### *Heat Stress Plan (indoor or outdoor)*

The university will actively monitor Environment Canada for heat alerts (including humidex, heat waves and smog alerts) and will implement and communicate appropriate actions when the humidex exceeds 35C or when other warnings are

present . Actions will include but not limited to:

- Encouraging workers to drink liquids to replace body fluids lost through perspiration and to maintain a normal body core temperature
- Acclimating to the heat by slowly increasing the time in hot working conditions gradually or reducing the physical demands of the job for a week or two (until your body has become accustomed to the heat)
- Taking frequent breaks in a cool area (i.e. in an air conditioned area)
- If possible, completing strenuous jobs at cooler times of the day
- Avoiding direct sunlight where possible
- Wearing light summer clothing that allows free air movement and sweat evaporation and hats

Communication may be done through emails, notices on communication boards or announcements at pre shift meetings.

### ***Cold Stress Plan (indoor or outdoor)***

The University will actively monitor Environment Canada for cold alerts and implement and communicate appropriate responses ([Cold Environments - Working in the Cold : OSH Answers \(ccohs.ca\)](#)). Responses include but not limited to:

- Wearing clothing appropriate for the task and dress in layers. Examples include thermal wear, winter coats, hats, gloves, layers etc.
- Reducing exposure time outside when the windchill is extreme
- Avoid sweating. Remove layers clothing to prevent clothes from becoming wet
- Take frequent long breaks in a warm area (work/warm schedule)

Communication may be done through emails, notices on communication boards or announcements at pre shift meetings.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

Managers and designates of identified departments will be responsible to monitor and implement appropriate actions in response to heat and cold stress.

Supervisors will be responsible to monitor their workers for signs and symptoms of exposure to heat and cold.

## **COMMUNICATION**

This procedure will be communicated to all employees of Victoria University

Records of communications and actions taken will be kept by the applicable department for record keeping purposes.

<b>TRAINING</b>
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All applicable workers will be trained on the signs and symptoms of heat and cold stress, body reactions to hot and cold and prevention measures.

<b>EVALUATION</b>
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This procedure will be reviewed as per the review schedule or when legislation is updated to ensure compliance.

<b>RELATED PROCEDURES</b>
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N/A

<b>REFERENCE MATERIALS</b>
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N/A

<b>APPENDICES</b>
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N/A

<b>Approved Signature:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Distribution to: All Managers Joint Health and Safety Committee</b>	<b>Document to be posted: No</b>