



SAFETY ALERT

Heat Injury

With summer approaching, it's timely to consider the risks of heat and ways to manage them. The significant risks associated with exposure to extreme heat was sadly made clear in a number of recent mining and exploration incidents where workers were injured or died because of exposure to sustained physical exertion and heat.

In DRA, we need to be mindful our members and other volunteers come from diverse backgrounds, levels of ability and fitness and may not be sufficiently acclimatised.

The risks of dehydration and fatigue not only affect those who work long periods in direct sun but also people working indoors or in travelling for significant periods of time or working for long durations in vehicles.

DRA mission commanders and team leaders should be especially vigilant for signs and symptoms of heat illness. All members should follow the requirements contained in the DRA SWMS Operations during weather extremes.

Safe Work Australia has released updated guidance material on managing the risks of working in heat. [Managing the risks of working in heat](#) now includes additions to the recommended first aid for heat stroke. The guidance for heat stroke is to immediately call an ambulance and then a number of first aid steps, including the addition of the following:

- If practicable and safe to do, immersion in a bath of cold water is the most effective means for cooling a person.
- Immerse the worker (whole-body from the neck down) in a bath of cold water (preferably 1–7°) for 15 minutes. Continuously observe the worker to ensure an open airway in case of any change in their level of consciousness.

If a cold bath is not available, or is not reasonably practicable or safe to use, use a combination of the following as available:

- cool the worker by splashing cool or cold water on their skin or sponging their skin with a damp cloth; and
- make a wind tunnel by suspending sheets around, not on, the worker's body; and
- use a fan to direct gentle airflow over the worker's body.

DRA requires that if a person is being immersed, a minimum of 2 people (who are minimum first aid trained and capable of lifting the patient from the bath) must stay with them and if there is any drowsiness, increased confusion or loss of consciousness they must be pulled from the water or have the plug removed immediately and other cooling methods applied.

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