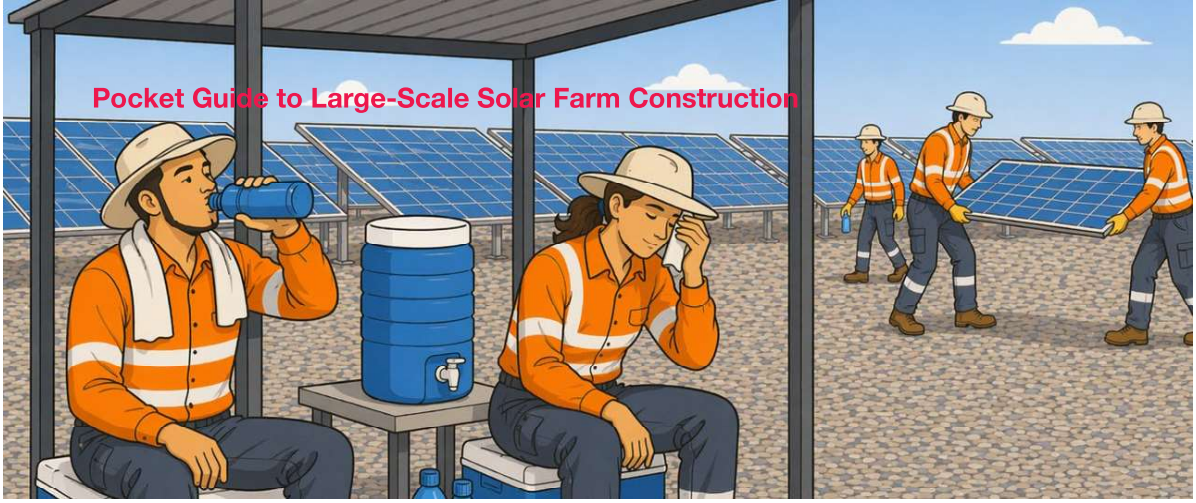


Hazard Fact Sheet - Heat Stress

What is the Hazard?

Heat stress occurs when the body cannot properly cool itself, leading to fatigue, dehydration, heat exhaustion, or heat stroke. Solar farm construction involves long periods outdoors in high temperatures, direct sunlight, and reflective surfaces, increasing risk.

Types of Injuries / Health Effects

- Dehydration
- Heat rash, cramps, and exhaustion
- Heat stroke (medical emergency)
- Fatigue and impaired concentration
- Increased risk of incidents or errors

Causes / Scenarios

- Working outdoors in extreme heat or high UV conditions
- Wearing inappropriate clothing/PPE without shade or rest periods
- Inadequate water intake
- Poor acclimatisation for new workers or FIFO personnel
- High work rates or heavy manual handling in hot environments

Control Measures

- Slow down heavy or fast-paced tasks in the hottest part of the day and speak up if the pace feels unsafe.
- Take your breaks in shaded or cooler areas whenever possible and use them to cool down, not keep working.
- Sip water often (not large amounts all at once) and use electrolyte drinks if you are sweating heavily.
- Wear light, breathable, sun-protective clothing, a wide-brim hat and sunscreen, and change sweat-soaked clothes when you can.
- Notice early signs like headache, dizziness, cramps, confusion or nausea, and stop work and get help immediately if they appear.
- If you are new to site or just back from time off, ease into full workloads over several days to let your body acclimatise.

https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/guide-managing-risks-working-heat



Safe Work Australia - Guidance Material: Managing the risks of working in heat



Case Example:

Worker Overheating During Panel Handling in Extreme Conditions

Workers observed installing 25 kg panels in temperatures above 40°C with strong winds. Work continued over long shifts despite unsafe thermal conditions, leading to near misses from heat exhaustion and physical fatigue.

Key Lessons Learned:

- Take breaks in the shade and drink water often. Staying cool helps prevent heat exhaustion.
- Stop work if the heat feels too much, tell your supervisor straight away.
- Look out for your teammates - if someone looks unwell, get help immediately.