

Mask Use - Hot Temperatures

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, face masks have become one of the most common personal protective equipment (PPE) used in workplaces. While many workplaces and government restrictions require the use of face masks to help reduce the spread of COVID-19, workers may find themselves uncomfortable while performing their work activities, especially during the summer months.

Manitoba's summer brings hot temperatures and high humidity. When wearing a mask, we feel warm, moist air against our face as we exhale and our mask gets damp, which makes us feel hotter. A damp mask may cause trouble breathing, increases our perception of anxiety, is less efficient at filtering bacteria, and may provide a distraction while working.

What is the Danger?

Working in very hot temperatures for an extended period of time, can put you at risk of heat-related illnesses such as heat exhaustion, dehydration or in extreme situations, heat stroke. Your mask's material and fit could play a role in overheating.

Heat-related illnesses are preventable and knowing the signs and symptoms can help reduce the chance of exposure.

Signs and Symptoms

Dehydration

- Increased thirst
- Dizziness or lightheaded
- Tiredness or fatigue
- Dry mouth, lips and eyes
- Decreased urination
- Dark urine color
- Rapid breathing
- Low blood pressure

Heat Exhaustion

- Heavy Sweating
- Cold, pale and clammy skin
- Fast, weak pulse
- Nausea or vomiting
- Muscle cramps
- Tiredness or weakness
- Dizziness or Fainting
- Headache

Heat Stroke

- High body temperature
- Hot, red, dry, or damp skin
- Fast, strong pulse
- Headache
- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Confusion
- Losing consciousness

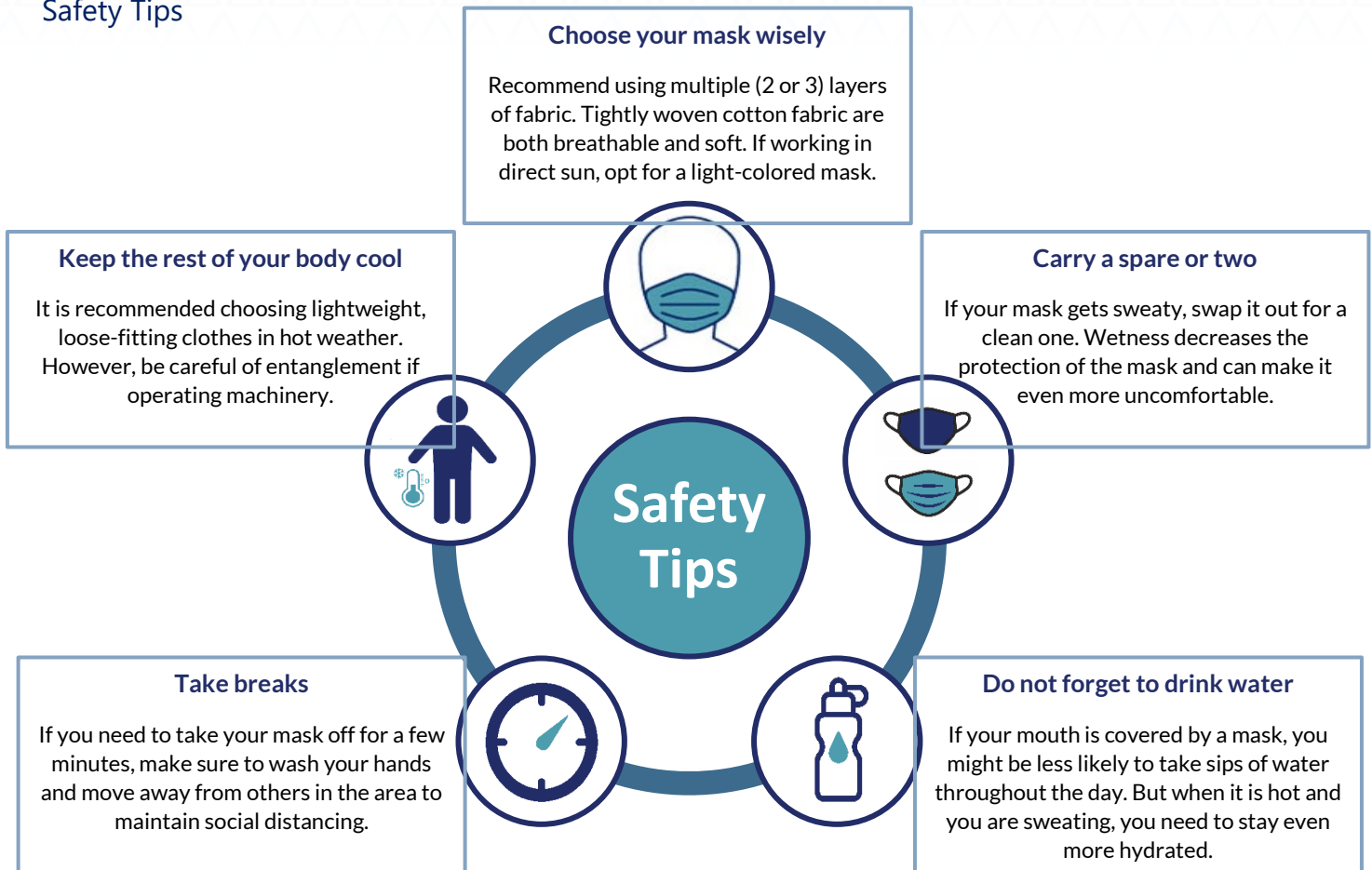
A damp mask as a result from heat and sweat may produce discomfort and other potential hazards. For example, a worker pulling a mask away from their face to cool their skin while performing a job that requires two hands. This can cause both a distraction safety hazard and potentially increase the workers exposure to the COVID-19 virus through incorrect handling of the mask.



SAFETY TALKS

Mask Use - Hot Temperatures

Safety Tips



- ✓ Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer after touching or removing your mask. Germs thrive in warm, damp conditions like those created by a sweaty mask.
- ✓ Wash reusable masks by using detergent and the warmest appropriate water setting, or by hand with a bleach solution. If your mask has a filter, remove the filter before washing. Dry them completely in your dryer or by laying them flat, in direct sunlight.
- ✓ Masks may not be necessary when you are outside by yourself and away from others. However, some areas have mask mandates while out in public, check for updated Manitoba Government orders before departure.

Demonstrate

Conduct a Safety Talk on Safe Mask Use and Heat Stress with workers before and during hot weather. The more information provided to workers, the greater the ability to differentiate between heat stress and discomfort due to mask use.

Show workers where they can get drinking water throughout the day, and where to access cool spots during breaks.

Discussion

What is the procedure for safely removing or disposing of a mask?

What are some ways we can change existing work procedures during hot weather?



SAFETY TALKS

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Manitoba Workplace Safety and Health Act and Regulation

Part 4 - General Workplace Requirements (4.6, 4.9, 4.12)

Workers Involved in this Safety Talk

Date: _____

Name	Signature

Name	Signature

Notes

Please contact S2SA with any questions or concerns!

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