

## **OSSTF Toronto Teachers' Bargaining Unit Heat Stress/ Injury Advisory**

Dear Members,

Hot weather days are upon us. For many, it's something we look forward to after a long, cold winter, but hot temperatures combined with high levels of humidity can create unsafe and unhealthy working conditions. This advisory addresses the impact of heat and/or humidity on unsafe and/or unhealthy working conditions, and also provides information about the TDSB's Hot Weather Plan. Please keep this handy for hot weather day referral.

### **OSSTF Toronto Teachers' Bargaining Unit Heat Injury Advisory**

The Occupational Health and Safety Act does *not* define maximum temperatures for our workplaces.

Under the General Duty Clause of the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA), the Ministry of Labour (MOL) has developed guidelines to address heat stress and assist employers in meeting their obligations.

Heat Stress is an increase in the body's core temperature due to one or more of the following, separately or in combination:

- Air temperature,
- Humidity,
- Radiant heat and the humidex.

A person experiencing Heat Stress may have one or more of the following symptoms:

- Heat Rash: heat-induced red, bumpy rash with severe itching;
- Heat Cramps: heat-induced condition characterised by painful cramps in the arms, legs or stomach which can occur at work or later at home;
- Heat Exhaustion: A heat-induced condition characterised by sweating, cool, moist skin, body temperature over 38°C, weak pulse, and normal or low blood pressure;
- Heat Stroke: A heat-induced condition characterised by high body temperature (41°C) and any one of the following:

- weakness, confusion, emotional upset and strange behaviour;
- hot, dry, red skin;
- fast pulse;
- headaches and dizziness;
- in the later stages, a person may pass out and have convulsions.

### **Injurious exposure to heat – what to do:**

If your work environment is responsible for any illness or injury or injurious exposure, including injurious exposure to heat or a combination of heat and humidity, you are advised as follows:

- Immediately report the issue to your principal, or in their absence, the vice-principal. Ensure arrangements are in place so that you can leave work and see your doctor immediately. If your doctor is unavailable, visit a walk-in clinic or an emergency department.
- Inform the doctor that you have experienced a workplace exposure to heat and request that the doctor complete a WSIB Form 8, Health Care Professional Reporting Form. The WSIB Form 8 report is a necessary part of the WSIB process, which could protect your sick leave.
- When you are able but without undue delay, you are **required** to complete the TDSB's Employee's Report of Accident/Injury (ERAI) to record the heat injury. To find this form, sign into TDSBweb/People & Culture/Health & Safety/Forms/Employee's Report of Accident/Injury (ERAI).
- Contact your [OSSTF Health & Safety Inspector](#) or your [Executive Officer](#) for assistance with paperwork, advice and support at any time.
- As a worker, **the law requires** you to report any health and/or safety hazard. If you believe the heat in your work environment poses a hazard, **you are required to report** it using the Health & Safety Concern Form, available at TDSBweb/People & Culture/Health & Safety/Forms/Health and Safety Concern, Near Miss/Incident Form. Completion and submission of this form triggers a process whereby the heat hazard must be investigated and responded to within five working days. It is also the only process by which such hazards can be tracked and quantified. If you do not get a response from your principal or the response does not seem reasonable, [contact your Executive Officer](#).

### **TDSB Hot Weather Action Plan**

In addition, the TDSB requires all worksites to have a [Hot Weather Action Plan](#), which is to be activated when any of the following conditions occur:

- A heat wave: defined as 3 consecutive days of temperature of 32° C s or higher
- When the humidex reaches or exceeds 35° C
- When there is a smog alert combined with higher temperatures, or
- When there is an Environment Canada Humidex advisory – ambient air temperatures exceeding 30 degrees and the humidex exceeds 40° C.

Each TDSB worksite should have a [hot weather plan](#) that includes:

- Using fans to provide air movement, where possible;
- Keeping lights and computers turned off, where possible;
- Keeping doors and windows open;
- Rotating staff and students into cooler/air-conditioned areas within the school, where available;
- Drinking lots of water;
- Reducing strenuous activities, including gym and sports activities;

## **Ministry of Labour**

Finally, at any time, a worker can make an anonymous complaint about a health and/or safety issue, including extreme heat, to the Ministry of Labour by calling 1-877-202-0008 (provided the Health and Safety Concern Form has been completed first, as outlined above).

Your health and your safety are of primary concern to your OSSTF TTBU Executive. Please speak with [your Executive Officer](#) if you have any questions or concerns about this or any other union-related matter at any time.