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Subject: INTERNAL COMMUNICATION: VIRTUAL TOOLBOX TALK: Air Quality & Heat Stress - To McSence Contractors & Property Services Colleagues

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Good Afternoon,

Purpose / objectives: This virtual toolbox talk is to increase colleagues' and contractors' awareness of Air Quality & Heat Stress with some guidance on the key steps you need to take protect yourself/others.

McSence Company Policy: Please click on these links for the company Policies, HSE information on Confined Spaces & Ventilation:

- <https://www.mcsence.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Adverse-Weather-Policy.pdf>
- [Health-Safety-Policy.pdf \(mcsence.co.uk\)](#)
- [Health-Wellbeing-Policy.pdf \(mcsence.co.uk\)](#)
- [Working in confined spaces: introduction – HSE](#)
- [Overview – Ventilation in the workplace \(hse.gov.uk\)](#)

Air Quality – Virtual Toolbox Talk
<p>Why run a virtual Air Quality Toolbox Talk?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase employee awareness• Outline the health effects of poor Air quality• What can be done to improve air quality
<p>Factors Affecting Outdoor Air Quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Weather – extreme dry heat and extreme cold and wind chill• Air pollution & dust• Pollen• Forest Fires
<p>Indoor Air Quality Potential Hazards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gases, vapours, odours• Poor ventilation or no ventilation• Dusts e.g. wood, crystalline silica, and flour• Chemicals• Solvents• Bacteria and viruses• Asbestos• Moulds or fungi• Exhaust fumes, diesel & LPG• Volatile organic compounds (VOCs)
<p>How To Maintain or Improve Outdoor Air Quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep surfaces that can generate dusts wet• Low speed limits to reduce dust generation• Store fine powders and/or materials in areas with adequate wind protection• Make sure that suppression systems are working and working effectively on any machinery it is installed on• Covered vehicles transporting dry materials to and from the site• Minimise drop heights into containers or trailers• Ensure any cutting or grinding work is wetted

How To Maintain or Improve Indoor Air Quality

- Adequate ventilation either mechanical or natural
- Change filters regularly
- Substitute tools to ones that have on-tool extraction
- Get your ventilation serviced to maintain correct airflow
- Vacuum up any dust using a HEPA filter vacuum
- Keep the workplace clean and tidy

Key takeaways:

- *Poor air quality can affect people's health*
- *There are simple measures to improve or maintain outdoor air quality*
- *There are simple measures to improve or maintain indoor air quality*

Heat Stress: Virtual Toolbox Talk

Heat Stress: Manual, construction workers and other professionals are exposed to heat stress risks every summer. Heat is a silent killer in the workplace and on the job site, causing people to suddenly collapse and fail to recover at the hospital.

Staying hydrated and wearing the right clothing can go a long way in protecting workers from heat stress. However, you may need to change your work patterns as well during heat waves where temperatures peak.

What Heat-Related Illnesses (HRI) are Common? Heat does more than just make you sweat, which is an essential part of staying cool. When your body's natural cooling abilities are overwhelmed by heat and humidity, your internal temperature rises which can cause mild to serious heat related illnesses, or HRI.

Heat Exhaustion: Heat exhaustion is less serious than a heat stroke, but it still requires treatment and attention to avoid permanent damage. It occurs because you have either become dehydrated and/or are low on sodium (salt) where the signs include:

- Nausea
- Headache, especially coming on suddenly
- Pale or clammy skin
- Muscle cramps
- Dizziness
- Fainting
- Vomiting

Actions(s): *Move out of the sun and rest any time you experience early symptoms of heat exhaustion. An upset stomach tends to occur when you drink plenty of water but don't have enough salt and other electrolytes in your system. Salt tablets, salty snacks, and sports drinks can all help to provide enough sodium to keep heat exhaustion at bay.*

Heatstroke: Heatstroke is a more serious than HRI and it that can kill. However, even non-fatal cases of heatstroke can still leave you with permanent organ damage, including to the brain. You don't have to show any warning signs of heat exhaustion before progressing to this stage. It can come on suddenly, especially if you are dehydrated, impaired in your ability to sweat, or are exposed to sudden swings in temperature with the symptoms of heatstroke being:

- A lack of sweating despite the heat
- Bright red skin that is hot to the touch
- Flushed appearance in the face and chest
- Disorientation, confusion, or anger
- Extreme headache that may cause visual distortion
- Higher than usual body temperature
- Seizures or muscle spasms
- Partial or full loss of consciousness.

Actions(s): *Emergency treatment can save the life of someone experiencing heatstroke, so call 999 at the first sign of this condition and follow their instructions to safely begin cooling the worker down until an ambulance arrives.*

Heat Cramps: Heat cramps are muscle cramps caused specifically by the dehydrating and salt-depleting effects of hot weather. As you sweat, your muscles lose the water and salt they need to perform. Even drinking plenty of water and sports drinks will only replenish your system so quickly. Working too hard or too quickly could leave you experiencing a muscle cramp that could be dangerous in a high-pressure construction or manufacturing setting. Taking breaks may slow the workflow slightly, but it will keep work going far smoother than stopping to deal with heat exhaustion or cramps.

The Importance of Clothing: Clothing and personal protection equipment (PPE) play a major role in HRI on the job site. Many workers adapt to the hazards or discomfort of the work by wearing long-sleeved shirts and heavily reinforced workwear. These layers all trap heat and make it harder to cool yourself while working. PPE also tends to trap heat and concentrate the risks, even when the helmets, masks, and other equipment are designed for hot weather use. It may be necessary to use more workers on shorter shifts to give everyone more breaks from wearing PPE as they rotate in and out of the work area.

Adapting Your Work Patterns to Extreme Heat: Other adaptations to work patterns can greatly reduce HRI risk for construction workers. First, set up temporary shade structures or concentrate work areas in shaded areas. Don't cut materials or assemble parts in the sun if the shade is available. Pop-up worksite cabins and offices that include air-conditioning are recommended as break areas.

Don't let heat stress become a silent danger on your work site. With a generous supply of water, a steady source of salt and other electrolytes, and a place to get out of the heat, construction work can safely continue through the summer.

Please also see the links below for more HSE & company information...

HSE WEBSITE – see links below:

- HSE – Asbestos Essentials - <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/guidance/a0.pdf>
- HSE – COSHH - <https://www.hse.gov.uk/coshh/basics/whatdo.htm>
- HSE – Lifting Equipment at Work <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg290.htm>
- HSE – Manual Handling at Work –<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg143.htm>
- HSE – Needlestick - [Sharps injuries - What you need to do \(hse.gov.uk\)](#)
- HSE – Painting & Coatings [Frequently asked questions – Paint and coatings \(hse.gov.uk\)](#)
- HSE – Slips, Trips & Falls <http://www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/slips.htm>
- HSE – Working at Height/Ladders <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg455.pdf>

STAFF ZONE is our bespoke intranet for McSence colleagues with company information in one place where you if you click this link [McSence | Home | McSence](#) or scan the barcode below, then enter passcode is [staffzone123](#) it will take you to the following company **StaffZone**

- Company Handbooks [McSence Handbooks | McSence](#)
- Company Policies: [McSence Policies | McSence](#)
- Health & Safety: [McSence Health & Safety Information | McSence](#)



Any feedback is most welcome and going forward we will be sharing more of this information on a regular basis.

Warmest regards, Martha

Martha Convie

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