

HEATWAVE: Heat Dome Survival Tips



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“Has high blood pressure got a hold on me, or is this the way love’s supposed to be?
It’s like a heat wave burning in my heart...” – [\(Love Is Like a\) Heat Wave](#), Martha & the Vandellas

Since the Heat Dome started scorching the US a few days ago, I’ve been humming *(Love Is Like a) Heat Wave* while imagining the desiccated wasteland world of Mad Max Rockatansky:



Source: http://images-cdn.moviepilot.com/images/c_fill,h_1080,w_1920/t_mp_quality/ubwwwv6gns30nxhavxac3/10-mad-facts-you-didn-t-know-about-mad-max-mel-gibson-in-mad-max-2-the-road-warrior-398988.jpg

As I’m not a sensationalist, I’ll admit that our current Heat Dome is likely far less severe than the post-apocalyptic Australian desert. Still, the Heat Dome poses potential health risks for nonprofit employees, volunteers, service recipients and visitors, as well as potential business interruption risks. Try the risk tips below to keep yourself cool-while keeping your mission running hot-during this sweltering summer.

- **Stay hydrated.** Dehydrated employees can suffer from distracting symptoms like headaches, heat rash and swollen feet, or even life-threatening illnesses like heat stroke. Provide water, juicy fresh fruits and vegetables, and electrolyte drinks to your participants, clients, employees and volunteers, especially when they spend time outside or after engaging in physical activity or manual labor. The [American Heart](#)

[Association](#) states that some individuals may require more water to stay hydrated, for example, if they perspire heavily, if they drink caffeinated beverages (which act as a diuretic), or if they have certain medical conditions like diabetes, heart disease, or cystic fibrosis. Dr. John Batson, a sports medicine physician and American Heart Association volunteer, reminds us that “if you get thirsty, you’re already dehydrated,” so thirst isn’t the best indicator that you need water. The best indicator might be the color of your urine, so place signs in employee bathrooms to remind employees that dark yellow urine is a sign of dehydration. Though drinking isn’t a celebrated activity in many workplaces, it should be during this heat wave! Encourage your team members to drink up and consider hosting hydration happy hours or standing meetings near the water cooler.

- **Prepare for power outages.** This Heat Dome is a recipe for electrical grid failures as hundreds of thousands of Americans turn their AC units to full blast. Your office could be affected by power outages too, so develop a plan for telecommuting or keeping the power on in your building—before a power outage strikes. Advise employees to plan for personal power outages as well.
- **Read up on occupational heat exposure.** The Occupational Safety and Health Administration offers free resources regarding occupational heat exposure. Read up on [heat hazards for workers](#), support OSHA’s [campaign to prevent heat illness in outdoor workers](#), and download the [Heat Safety Tool mobile app](#) to reference heat safety info on the go.
- **Don’t shame sweating.** Sweating helps regulate body temperature and as sweat evaporates from the surface of our skin, our bodies cool down. So don’t be surprised if your colleagues seem especially soggy this week—sweating helps them beat the heat! While there’s nothing wrong with a little sweat, you can help reduce unpleasant aromas that may linger amongst your perspiring personnel. Consider placing a few toiletries in the men and women’s bathrooms at your office, such as refreshing body wipes and spray deodorant (spray deo is shareable unlike roll-on deo!).
- **Care for your canines.** The Center is dog friendly as many offices are nowadays. Don’t forget to crank up the air conditioning and leave fresh water out for your furry friends, who can overheat easily. Remind your colleagues to walk their pets in shady areas or to take shorter walks scattered throughout the day.

Beat the Heat Dome by keeping heat safety top-of-mind this summer!

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