



August 27 — Know When to Stop

Employees working in a baghouse compartment on 81' level trying to change out filter bags in extreme heat conditions. Serious potential for heat related illness. Wet bulb temp: 100.4 Actual temp 135.

I stopped the job and told them we'd try in the morning. Despite many cool off breaks, the work wasn't worth their health. No job is.

Sometimes the safest decision...

...is deciding not to do the job today.

A crew was preparing to replace filter bags inside a baghouse compartment on the 81-foot level when conditions became dangerously hot. With a wet bulb temperature of 100.4°F and an actual air temperature of 135°F, the potential for heat exhaustion or heat stroke was extremely high.

Rather than pushing through the work to stay on schedule, the supervisor made the decision to stop the job. The crew was removed from the area, and the work was rescheduled for a safer time.

It can be difficult to pause work when deadlines are approaching, but good safety leadership means recognizing when conditions have changed beyond what can be safely managed. Hydration, breaks, and cooling measures are important controls, but there are times when the environment itself becomes the hazard. Knowing when to stop is just as important as knowing how to work safely.

Making the decision to stop work isn't a sign of weakness or lost productivity—it's a demonstration of sound judgment and a commitment to sending everyone home healthy.

Hazards

- Heat exhaustion
- Heat stroke
- Dehydration
- Fatigue and impaired decision making
- High wet bulb temperatures
- Reduced physical performance

Words of Wisdom

Good judgment isn't knowing how much you can endure—it's knowing when it's time to stop.

Pause and Think

- Are today's weather and work conditions increasing your risk of heat illness?
- Have you and your coworkers been drinking water and taking cool-down breaks?
- Do you recognize the early signs of heat stress in yourself and others?
- If conditions become unsafe, would you be willing to stop the job?
- Who on your crew might need someone to speak up on their behalf today?

Closing Thought

The best safety decisions aren't always the easiest ones. Sometimes the most professional thing you can do is recognize that conditions have become too hazardous and stop the work. Jobs can be rescheduled, lives cannot.