



June 4 — Knowing When to Stop

<p>I was working up in the pipe rack of energy center hanging/moving pipe around and it was very hot. I was sweating a lot and got to the point where I knew I needed to take a break</p>	<p>I got down, went outside to cool down and drank water and didn't go back up until I was cooled down and hydrated. Taking heat breaks</p>
---	---

Most people don't wake up in the morning planning to push themselves too far.

It usually happens a little at a time. One more task. One more piece of pipe. One more trip before taking a break.

While working in the pipe rack of the Energy Center, an employee was hanging and moving pipe in extremely hot conditions. As the work continued, he noticed he was sweating heavily and began recognizing the signs that his body was struggling with the heat. Instead of trying to push through, he made the decision to stop, climb down, cool off, and drink water. He didn't return to work until he was cooled down and properly hydrated.

That decision may not seem significant, but it is exactly how heat-related illnesses are prevented.

Heat stress rarely appears all at once. It often starts with fatigue, excessive sweating, thirst, headaches, dizziness, or difficulty concentrating. The danger is that many employees convince themselves they can finish the task before taking a break. Unfortunately, heat-related illnesses tend to get worse the longer someone waits to respond.

Working in elevated areas, around process equipment, or in direct sunlight can increase heat exposure and place additional stress on the body. When temperatures rise, recognizing the warning signs early becomes just as important as wearing the proper PPE.

The employee in this situation recognized those signs and took action before the situation escalated. That's not a sign of weakness—it's a sign of good judgment.

Hazards

- Heat exhaustion
- Heat Stroke
- Dehydration
- Reduced concentration and awareness
- Fatigue-related mistakes
- Increased risk of injury due to impaired decision making

Words of Wisdom

Your body usually gives you warning signs before a heat-related illness occurs. Pay attention to them. Taking a break, drinking water, and cooling down early is far easier than recovering from a medical emergency later.

Pause and Think

- What warning signs tell you it's time to take a break from the heat?
- Have you ever continued working when you knew you should have stopped?
- What factors make heat stress harder to recognize in yourself?
- How can coworkers help identify signs of heat stress before they become serious?
- What steps do you take to stay hydrated throughout the day?

Closing Thought

The strongest workers aren't the ones who ignore the warning signs. They're the ones who recognize them early and take action.