

Heat & Asphalt



As in any state, the summer months can be TOUGH when you're laying hot asphalt. But in the heart of Sydney, temperatures can easily get up to 45°C during the day. If you take into consideration that the asphalt is a minimum of 150°C when laying hot mix, the combination can be a scorcher.

We have learned over the years, the heat can't be avoided all together, but our workers can combat the rising temperatures through some hard learned best practices.

Excellent thoughts

- When doing an asphalt paving job, start our day as early as possible usually before 6 am. Try to get as much done as possible before the peak heat of the day which is usually after 1 pm.
- Make sure our crew protects themselves from the sun by wearing long sleeves. This may seem strange in extreme heat, but it actually helps as the sleeves trap the sweat in from your body. Perspiration is our body's natural cooling system and we try to take advantage of that.
- Also provides crew with large hats that allow for a "create your own shade" alternative. Keep PLENTY of water and encourage crew to get a drink **before not after** you're thirsty. The key is to stay hydrated and drink plenty of electrolytes.

- Also encourage the crew members get on a vitamin regimen. Vitamins will actually give you that extra push you need when you feel tired. Always eat a balanced breakfast and try to include a **banana** as often as you can. This is a great source of Potassium which your body loses during the exposure to heat and profuse sweating and can lead to dehydration. Allow crew to take plenty of breaks in shaded areas.
- This coming summer, try something new - a product called **'Sqwincher Squeeze Electrolyte Freeze Pops'** (sqwincher.com). We found this one most effective weapons to fight hot Sydney summer.

OH&S Agrees

Also learn best practices through on the job training, there are professional resources available that help combat heat related illnesses. According to the Occupational Health & Safety (OH&S), there has been 69 reported heat related deaths since 2008. OH&S says could have been prevented with heat illness prevention and training.

According to their website (www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au) any worker exposed to hot and humid conditions is at risk of heat illness, especially those doing heavy work tasks or using bulky protective clothing and equipment, particularly those in the construction industry. Heat illnesses range from heat rash and heat cramps to heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Heat stroke requires immediate medical attention and can result in death.

They also state that employers should establish a complete heat illness prevention program to prevent heat illness. This includes: providing workers with water, rest and shade; gradually increasing workloads and allowing more frequent breaks for new workers or workers who have been away for a week or more to build a tolerance for working in the heat (acclimatization); modifying work schedules as necessary; planning for emergencies and training workers about the symptoms of heat-related illnesses and their prevention; and monitoring workers for signs of illness.

For more information about heat related illnesses and OH& training to prevent them **visit www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au**