



25.12 Low Humidity Environments: A Guide for Exposed Employees

Introduction

Some types of work may need to be undertaken in clean and dry conditions. When working in these (Low Humidity) areas for extended periods, there is the potential for workers health to be affected in several ways.

Why might you need to be assessed?

Your employer may identify that you work or regularly enter low humidity areas during your work.



How these conditions might affect your health:

Skin – could give rise to skin dryness, cracking and skin irritation. These problems may lead to rashes and sore areas.

Breathing – may cause drying out respiratory tract mucous membrane leading to sore throat, irritation of lungs and an increased likelihood of respiratory tract infections.

Vision – very dry conditions may increase the speed at which fluid evaporates from the eyes leaving them dry and itchy. It may also cause problems with the wearing of some types of contact lenses.

Dehydration – these conditions may lead to a greater than normal fluid loss. This depletion could have a negative effect on other, unrelated, medical conditions.

How can you help reduce the risks?

Take regular approved breaks and stay hydrated. Report any symptoms from working conditions to your manager promptly. If you are not sure how much extra fluid you need to drink, the colour of your urine can be a good indicator. Light straw or near-clear urine indicates good hydration. If you have a health condition affected by low humidity, inform your employer or Occupational Health Advisor.

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What happens if a health problem is identified?

Your Occupational Health Advisor may request written consent to share relevant health information with your employer to help manage your case— you control what is shared. For concerns about data use, see the OH Provider's Data Processing Statement. Depending on findings, you may be referred to your GP or another healthcare professional.

<https://www.southtees.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Urine-colour-chart.pdf>

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