

## TOOLBOX TALK #50

### ACCLIMATIZE TO WORK IN HOT ENVIRONMENTS



The term “acclimatization” is used a lot when introducing workers to hot environments, but what exactly does it mean? What are the steps involved?

Acclimatization is the process your body goes through as it adapts to changes in its environment.

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) recommends employers follow this acclimatization schedule:

- For new workers, allow no more than 20% of the usual duration on the first day, and not increase more than 20% each subsequent day.
- For workers with previous experience, allow no more than 50% of usual duration on the first day, 60% on the second day, 80% on the third day and 100% on the fourth day.

“Workers can maintain their acclimatization even if they are away from the job for a few days, such as when they go home for the weekend,” NIOSH says. “However, if they are absent for a week or more, then there may be a significant loss in the beneficial adaptations, leading to an increased likelihood of heat-related illness and a need to gradually reacclimate to the hot environment.”