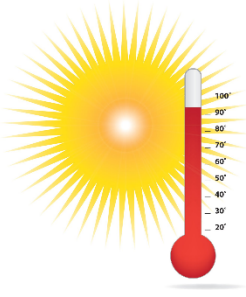


# Baby It's Hot There!

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Ok I know I'm stating the obvious but now that we are in the 'dog days of summer' it's important to remind ourselves and others about the danger of heat and humidity. Let's be real, none of likes to admit when we just can't take the heat, especially in front of the boss or fellow co-workers who may be handling (or seem to be handling) the heat better than us. But heat-related illness is no joke and nothing to be ignored as it could potentially be life-threatening.

A great App to download is "Heat Index", sponsored by OSHA (Occupational safety & Health Administration) and NIOSH (National Institute for Occupational Safety & Health). It provides the air temperature, humidity and the resulting heat index in the form of a 'danger' meter, of which there are three: Caution, Warning and Danger. It also provides recommended *Precautions* based on the day's conditions.

As I compose this information, it's currently 85 degrees in sunny Lugoff with the heat index at 87 degrees. This constitutes a 'warning' on the heat index meter. Yup, our bodies will tell us it's hot but this App also provides the signs, symptoms and first aid steps for heat stroke, heat exhaustion, rhabdomyolysis, heat cramps and heat rash – both in English and Spanish. This is the true value of the App, in my humble opinion. It's important to know the difference between each one of these heat illnesses so you know when you, a co-worker or employee should hydrate, rest and/or seek medical attention. At work, set up a buddy system to enable each other to look out for the other. Supervisors should maintain communications at all times with workers, watching for signs of heat-related illness and encouraging water and rest breaks.

Folks, we've got at least another 6 – 8 weeks of summer to go so do yourself and those around you a favor and be heat-savvy: drink fluids before you get thirsty such as water with electrolytes (sorry, Mt. Dew doesn't count), wear light weight and light-colored clothing if possible, including a hat, sunscreen and sunglasses and above all pace yourself as best you can and let someone know when you're feeling nauseous, lightheaded or you've stopped sweating, it could just save a life.

