Working in the Heat - Wearing a Mask

Important Hazard and Control Information for Wearing a Mask in the Heat

Managing worker safety while working in the heat during the COVID-19 pandemic can present challenges. The risks of heat and COVID-19 transmission need to be considered and weighed to ensure a balanced approach is taken.

Wearing a mask in the heat could increase breathing resistance and heat load, increasing the wearer’s risk of heat stress. This can occur both outdoors and indoors in hot environments.

If employees are experiencing breathing resistance due to mask use in the heat, they can follow these steps to utilize an exemption under masking requirements:

- Document the hazard of heat and breathing resistance due to masking on a field level hazard assessment, toolbox talk, meeting minutes, or applicable method.
- Determine what control(s) need to be used in the absence of wearing a mask and note them in the same method.
- Ensure that the control(s) selected help prevent potential spread of COVID-19 by using established controls such as physical distancing, shields, or taking breaks away from others without a mask.

Keeping workers safe while working in the heat and preventing the spread of COVID-19 are fundamental, but we should ensure that we document our hazard and control approach while utilizing the COVID-19 Workplace Measures where necessary.

Best Practice - Working Safely in the Heat and Cold