

## Heat Creep: How Heat Stress Builds Over Days

Heat doesn't just hit all at once; it builds. Whether you're climbing poles or hauling gear in the sun, repeated exposure to high temperatures can take a serious toll. This silent strain is known as **heat creep**, a slow, accumulative form of heat stress that can sneak up on even the toughest crews.

Without the right protection and planning, heat creep can result in fatigue, dehydration, decreased performance, and even medical emergencies. The good news? There are simple, proven ways to fight it, starting with what you wear, how you move, and staying hydrated.

### What Is Heat Creep?

**Heat creep** refers to the cumulative effects of working in hot environments day after day, especially without sufficient recovery. Unlike acute heat stress, which can hit suddenly, heat creep is a gradual buildup that can lower your body's tolerance to heat over time.

### Warning signs of heat creep can include:

- Increased fatigue earlier in the day
- Slower recovery overnight
- Headaches or dizziness by mid-shift
- Irritability or brain fog
- Decreased appetite or nausea

Even if you've worked in the heat for years, your body still needs time and the right tools to adjust to back-to-back days of high temperatures.



## Why Early Prevention Is Key

By the time you feel the full effects of heat stress, your body is already behind. That's why it's crucial to start protecting yourself before symptoms show up. It's not just about "pushing through," it's about keeping your body prepared all season long.

The three pillars of heat stress prevention are:

1. **Intentional movement:** Don't overexert early in the day; pace your workload in extreme conditions. (Vimocity)
2. **Consistent hydration:** Drink water and electrolyte-rich beverages throughout the day, not just during breaks. (Working Athlete)
3. **Protective workwear:** Wear lightweight, breathable, moisture-wicking FR clothing that helps regulate body temperature. (DragonWear)

## Why Proper Gear Matters Against Heat Creep

Standard cotton tees or heavy FR gear can trap heat and sweat, slowing evaporation and making it harder for your body to cool itself. In contrast, DragonWear's Pro Dry® Tech Collection is designed with:

- Advanced moisture-wicking technology
- Built-in UPF 50+ sun protection
- NFPA 70E CAT 2 compliance
- Lightweight, breathable fabrics

Together, these features reduce internal heat load, keep you drier longer, and support your body's natural ability to regulate core temperature across long, hot workweeks.



## How to Stay Ahead of Heat Creep

1. Start hydrating the day before your shift.
  - a. Drink 1 cup of cool water every 20 minutes, even if you aren't thirsty. For longer jobs, drinks with electrolytes are best. Avoid energy drinks and alcohol.
2. Eat balanced meals with enough salt and electrolytes
3. Wear moisture-wicking, breathable FR workwear
4. Avoid sprinting through heavy tasks early in the shift
5. Take short, regular breaks in shade or cool zones
6. Don't ignore early symptoms; fatigue is a red flag

## Beat the Heat Before It Beats You

Heat creep is real and preventable. When the work doesn't stop, your gear and habits can make all the difference. DragonWear's Pro Dry® Tech Collection, Vimocity, and Working Athlete can help you stay in control of your body temp, day after day, no matter how intense the heat gets.

## Sources

- NIOSH – Heat Stress: <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/heatstress/>
- OSHA – Occupational Heat Exposure Guide: <https://www.osha.gov/heat>

