



Cal OSHA Heat Illness Prevention Standard

If you are an employer in the state of California, and have employees who will be working outdoors, you must establish a written heat illness prevention program. This document will guide you to compliance, but it is the responsibility of the employer to best fit their individual program to the environment of their workplace.

Things to consider when building a program:

- The size of your crew
- The type of work performed
- The length of the work shift
- The outside temperature
- Please designate and document which individual, or group of people, will be responsible for the implementation of this program (e.g., supervisor, foreman, etc.)
- Note the details and procedures required to effectively mitigate against the environment (e.g., frequency of breaks, monitoring of temperature, proper amount of water or coolers, etc.)
- How this information is communicated to employees (e.g., training, meetings, etc.)

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Water

- Two Quarts (half gallon) per employee
- Refill when container reaches less than 50%
- All workers must have access to water
- Water should be cool, clean and kept close to employees
- Employees should take breaks when temperature reaches 80 degrees
- Increase length and frequency of breaks at 95 degrees

Shade

- Enough to comfortably accommodate all employees on break
- Required at 80 degrees.
- Consider making provisions when it is not feasible to provide shade

Weather monitoring

- Determine who is responsible for monitoring the weather and the frequency of which it will be monitored (e.g., before the workday, during the workday, etc.)
- Compare the temperature to heat index to determine “extreme caution” or “extreme danger” for heat illness
- Determine when it is necessary to make modifications to the work schedule (e.g., increasing frequency of breaks, stopping work early, rescheduling the job)

Heat wave and special conditions

- A heat wave is when the predicted high temperature at least 80 degrees, and at least 10 degrees higher than the average high daily temperature in the preceding five days
- Hold tailgate talks to review procedures, remind employees to drink water and take breaks
- Assign a “buddy” to monitor for signs of heat illness

High heat procedures (heat in excess of 95 degrees)

- Increased monitoring and communication (e.g., direct observation, buddy system, radio communication, etc.)
- Increased alertness for symptoms of heat illness

Agricultural

- There are special high heat procedures for agricultural work sites
- When the temperature reaches 95 degrees, employees must be provided one 10-minute “preventative cool-down rest period” every two hours (and an additional rest period every two hours when employees work longer than eight hours)
- Employer should keep documentation that the mandatory cool-down rest periods are provided and taken

Acclimatization

- The body needs time to adapt when temperatures rise suddenly
- Monitor for temperatures which employees haven't been exposed to for several weeks or longer
- New employees should be closely monitored for symptoms of heat illness for 14 days
- A “buddy” should monitor a new employee for signs of heat illness

Emergency response and handling a sick employee

- Determine who is responsible for contacting emergency medical services
- Consider a map of exact location to help guide emergency responders
- Ensure that a qualified and trained person is available to provide first aid if necessary, or determine when emergency responders must be called
- Follow appropriate steps to help an employee who may be suffering from heat illness (e.g., move to shade, drink water, remove clothing, apply ice packs, etc.)

Employee and supervisory training

- Supervisors should be trained in the company's written procedures, recognizing signs of heat illness, appropriate emergency response, weather tracking, and the responsibility to provide water, shade, and breaks for all employees
- Employees and supervisors should be trained prior to working outside (including aspects to implementing a successful Heat Illness Prevention Plan)
- Training should be documented and maintained

