



BIE SAFETY ADVISOR

OSHA Launches indoor and outdoor heat-related hazards National Emphasis Program (NEP)

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) launched an indoor and outdoor heat-related hazards [National Emphasis Program](#) (NEP) on April 8th.

OSHA plans to initiate inspections in over 70 high-risk industries in indoor and outdoor work settings when the National Weather Service has issued a heat warning or an advisory for a local area. Industries targeted by the NEP include those in the agricultural, construction, and manufacturing sectors, as well as automobile dealerships, postal service, and freight and rail transportation.

Agency inspectors will look for and address heat hazards during inspections beyond the industries targeted in the NEP.

“This enforcement program is another step towards our goal of a federal heat standard,” Walsh said in an agency statement.

On October 27, 2021, OSHA issued an advance notice of proposed rulemaking (ANPRM) on heat injury and illness prevention in outdoor and indoor work settings—the first step in developing a federal heat stress standard. The ANPRM contained no proposed regulatory text but posed 114 questions for stakeholders about a possible standard.

On days when the heat index is **80 degrees Fahrenheit or higher**, OSHA inspectors and compliance assistance specialists will engage in outreach and technical assistance to help employers keep workers safe on the job.

OSHA also instructed compliance safety and health officers (CSHOs) in its area offices to be vigilant, during their travel to jobsites, in conducting compliance assistance or making self-referral inspections of outdoor work environments in plain view.

During a heat-related inspection, CSHOs will:

- Review employers’ OSHA 300 injury and illness logs and 301 incident

reports for entries indicating heat-related illnesses.

- Review any records of heat-related emergency room visits and/or ambulance transport without hospitalization. Such record review may require the use of a Medical Access Order.
- Determine if the employer has a heat illness and injury program.
- Interview workers, including both new employees and any employees who have recently returned to work, for symptoms of dehydration, dizziness, fainting, headache, or other conditions that may indicate heat-related illnesses.

A CSHO’s evaluation of an employer’s heat illness and injury prevention program will examine employee training on heat illness signs, prevention, and the importance of hydration; how employees are instructed to report signs and symptoms; and procedures for first aid and contacting emergency personnel.

Questions regarding the heat illness and injury prevention program also will include:

- Is it a written program?
- Does the program include heat-acclimatization periods for new and returning workers?
- How does the employer monitor ambient temperatures and levels of work exertion at the worksite?
- Is unlimited cool water easily accessible to all employees?
- Are there scheduled rest breaks, with access to shaded areas, and does the employer require additional breaks for hydration?
- Are administrative controls like earlier start times and employee/job rotation used to limit heat exposures?
- Is a “buddy” system of worker observation used on hot days?

The NEP, signed April 8, remains effective for 3 years or until canceled, extended, or replaced by a superseding NEP.



Monthly Toolbox Talk

Protecting Workers from Heat Stress

Heat Illness

Exposure to heat can cause illness and death. The most serious heat illness is heat stroke. Other heat illnesses, such as heat exhaustion, heat cramps and heat rash, should also be avoided.

There are precautions that can be taken any time temperatures are high and the job involves physical work.

Risk Factors for Heat Illness

- High temperature and humidity, direct sun exposure, no breeze or wind.
- Heavy physical labor.
- No recent exposure to hot workplaces.
- Low liquid intake.
- Tight non-breathable clothing.

Symptoms of Heat Exhaustion

- Headache, dizziness, or fainting.
- Weakness and wet skin.
- Irritability or confusion.
- Thirst, nausea, or vomiting.

Symptoms of Heat Stroke

- May be confused, unable to think clearly, pass out, collapse, or have seizures.
- May stop sweating.

To Prevent Heat Illness

- Designate a responsible person to monitor conditions and protect workers who are at risk of heat stress.
- Drink plenty of fluids. Provide a supply of cool water to workers. At least one pint of water per hour is needed. Avoid beverages that contain caffeine.
- Modify work schedules and arrange for frequent rest periods with water breaks in shaded or air-conditioned areas.
- Gradually increase workloads and allow more frequent breaks for workers new to the heat or those that have been away from work to adapt to working in the heat (acclimatization).
- Wear lightweight, light colored, loose-fitting clothing. Consider protective clothing that provides cooling.
- Know signs/symptoms of heat illnesses; monitor yourself; use a buddy system.

Any employee feeling ill should notify a Supervisor immediately.

