

Outdoor Workers at Increased Risk for Heat Illness and Death During Extreme Heat Events

Attention: Employers with employees who work outside and are exposed to outdoor heat.

The recent unprecedented heat wave is a reminder of the dangers extreme heat can bring, especially to outdoor workers.

The Department of Labor & Industries (L&I) has added temporary emergency requirements to existing outdoor heat rules (www.Lni.wa.gov/HeatSmart) to provide increased protection for employees exposed to extreme heat while working outdoors.

Heat Illness Prevention Requirements

Employers must increase efforts to monitor workers for signs or symptoms of heat illness and ensure they are removed from danger to recover or receive prompt medical attention. Other basic requirements include:

- An Outdoor Heat Exposure Prevention Plan as part of the company's written Accident Prevention Program.
- Training for workers and supervisors to prevent, recognize, and effectively respond to heat-related illness.
- Ready access to at least one quart of drinking water per worker per hour as risk for heat illness increases.

When temperatures reach 89 degrees, new requirements specify:

- Water provided must be suitably cool in temperature.
- Employers must encourage, allow, and train workers to take additional paid preventative cool-down rest to protect themselves from overheating.

At 100 degrees or higher, new requirements specify the employer must also provide:

- Shade or another sufficient means for employees to cool down.
- Paid cool-down rest period of at least 10 minutes every two hours.

Symptoms of Heat-Related Illness

Heat Stroke (Medical Emergency!)

- Hot, red, dry skin, NO SWEATING
- Fast, strong pulse
- Body temperature of 104°F or higher
- Headache, dizziness, confusion
- Nausea
- Losing consciousness

Heat Exhaustion (Get to Shade, Provide Aid, Monitor Symptoms)

- HEAVY SWEATING
- Fast, weak pulse
- Cold, pale, clammy skin
- Headache, dizziness, mood change
- Nausea or vomiting
- Tiredness, weakness, muscle cramps



For Employers

Your Accident Prevention Program must address your company's safety practices for outdoor workers and their supervisors. Safety practices to consider include:

- Pre-work site assessment to plan for shade to accommodate workers during water and rest breaks (e.g., trees, roof overhangs, walls, canopies, etc.).
- Work and break schedules that allow workers to adjust to increased heat and avoid working during peak heat times.
- Transport, set up, and resupply of water.
- Arrangements to check-in with workers, especially during peak heat times, to observe any possible signs or symptoms of heat stress, encourage hydration, and stay in touch with anyone working alone.
- Emergency response measures so supervisors, lead workers, and others know what to do and who to notify if a coworker shows signs or symptoms of heat illness.
- A buddy system for pairs or small groups of workers to watch for signs and symptoms of heat illness amongst each other and to encourage hydration.

For Workers

You can be young, strong, and fit and still get very sick or even die when working in hot weather.

Here are some things to remember:

- Start your workday fully hydrated and keep track of how much you drink every hour (at least a quart is recommended); don't wait until you're thirsty and pace your drinking to get the most benefit (aim for every 15–20 minutes).
- Training will help you learn what heat stress looks and feels like and teach you what to do if you or someone you work with may be getting sick.
- Heat stress can creep up on you and affect your judgement. Pay attention to how you're feeling during the workday and don't ignore early warning signs.

- If you start to feel sick, STOP working and move to a shaded place to rest, cool off, drink water, and recover. Tell someone so they can check in with you to make sure your symptoms are not getting worse.
- Rest in the shade. Don't wait until you feel sick to cool down.
- Avoid resting in the shade near sources of radiant heat like machinery or concrete structures.

Other resources

For outdoor heat rules, information on heat safety programs, worker training resources, and steps employers can take to protect employees working in hot temperatures, visit: www.Lni.wa.gov/HeatSmart.

Accident Prevention Program: www.Lni.wa.gov/safety-health/preventing-injuries-illnesses/create-a-safety-program/accident-prevention-program.

Interactive online training module: Outdoor Heat Exposure and Heat Illness, can be found at: <https://wisha-training.Lni.wa.gov/training/articulate/HeatIllness/story.html>.

To find an electronic copy of this Hazard Alert, go to www.Lni.wa.gov/HazardAlerts.

L&I Safety web page: www.Lni.wa.gov/safety-health.

For other related rules, contact your local L&I office or visit the safety rules webpage: www.Lni.wa.gov/SafetyRules.

To find the nearest L&I office, visit www.Lni.wa.gov/Offices.

How can I get help from Labor & Industries?

The Department of Labor & Industries provides consultations, training, and technical assistance at no cost to employers. Call today to schedule a free confidential consultation or go to www.Lni.wa.gov/SafetyConsultants for more information.

You may also call 1-800-423-7233 or visit a local L&I office and ask for the Consultation Manager.