

OSHA Turns Up the Heat on Enforcement With New Heat Hazard Emphasis Program

On April 8, 2022, OSHA launched its National Emphasis Program (NEP) to protect workers from heat-related hazards in indoor and outdoor workplaces. Through the program, OSHA will conduct workplace inspections aimed at identifying heat-related hazards before workers suffer preventable injuries, illnesses or fatalities.

This NEP applies to all industries. The NEP became effective on April 8, 2022, and will remain in effect for three years, unless canceled or extended by a superseding directive.

NEP Background

The NEP establishes heat priority days, when the heat index is expected to be 80 degrees Fahrenheit or higher. On those priority days, OSHA will:

- Initiate compliance assistance in the targeted high-risk industries; and
- Continue to investigate any alleged heat-related fatality, catastrophe, complaint or referral, regardless of whether the worksite falls within a targeted high-risk industry.

The NEP encourages employers to protect their workers from heat-related hazards during heat priority days by providing them with access to water, rest, shade and adequate training, as well as implementing acclimatization procedures for new or returning employees.

Loss Control & Risk Management Solutions

There is never a one size fits all approach to developing a safety system. The common elements existing in almost all health and safety systems are management leadership, worker participation, hazard identification and assessment, hazard prevention and control, education and training, and program evaluation and improvement. These elements are both interrelated and interdependent but necessary to ensure the success of any program.

Call us today to discuss your organization's loss control and safety programs or learn more about the services and experience our team has to offer.

Katy

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Did you know...



Every year, dozens of workers die and thousands more become ill while working in hot or humid conditions.

OSHA's [revised Heat Illness Prevention campaign webpage](#) consolidates resources on the dangers of working in the heat and how to keep workers safe.

NEP Overview

The goal of this OSHA NEP is to reduce or eliminate workers' exposure to heat-related hazards that may result in illnesses, injuries or deaths by targeting industries and worksites (including those with radiant heat sources) where employees are exposed to such hazards and have not been provided adequate protection. The primary mitigation strategies for controlling heat-related hazards include providing cool water and rest areas, conducting necessary training, and implementing acclimatization procedures for applicable employees.

In addition, this NEP will:

- Incorporate and expand on the Sept. 1, 2021, heat initiative memorandum to further focus on heat-related hazards in both the outdoor and indoor work environments; and
- Provide procedures for planned, programmed and follow-up inspections in targeted workplaces.

This NEP prioritizes on-site (in-person) responses for complaints and employer-reported hospitalizations (i.e., severe injury reports) stemming from heat-related hazards.

High-risk Industries

The NEP targets over 70 industries that present a high risk for heat-related hazards. OSHA identified these industries based on Bureau of Labor Statistics data and its own reports, which found that high-risk industries have exhibited:

- High numbers or incidence rates of heat-related illnesses;
- An elevated number of days away from work or high numbers of severe cases of heat-related illnesses;
- The highest number of heat-related general duty clause violations and hazard alert letters over a five-year period; or
- The highest number of heat-related OSHA inspections since 2017

Programmed inspections under this NEP will occur on any day that the National Weather Service (NWS) has announced a heat warning or advisory for the local area. A list of high-risk industries can be found in the NEP under Appendix A.

How Inspections Are Determined

To prevent heat-related illnesses and deaths, compliance safety and health officers (CSHOs) conducting on-site investigations for other purposes must open or refer inspections for any heat-related hazards physically observed, recorded in OSHA Form 300, logged in 301 Incident Reports, or reported by workers (e.g., employees or temporary workers being exposed to high-temperature conditions without adequate training, acclimatization measures or access to water, rest or shade). The expansion of inspections must be conducted in accordance with the Field Operations Manual (FOM).

Additionally, CSHOs will inquire during inspections about the existence of any heat-related hazard prevention programs in place for heat priority days. A heat priority day occurs when the heat index for the day is expected to be 80 degrees Fahrenheit or more. The OSHA Area Office (AO) will assess the potential for serious heat-related illnesses and injuries where such hazards may exist in indoor or outdoor work areas on heat priority days, providing compliance assistance where needed.





Try this Cooling Cucumber Basil & Watermelon Salad!

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon soy sauce or tamari to make this salad gluten free
- 1 small garlic clove, minced
- ½ teaspoon minced ginger
- 2 teaspoons fresh lime juice
- 2 teaspoons rice vinegar
- 3 cups watermelon, deseeded and cut into cubes or melon balls
- 1 English cucumber, chopped into ¼-inch pieces (about 2 cups)
- 1 ripe mango, skin removed and chopped into ½-inch pieces
- ½ serrano pepper, thinly sliced
- ¼ cup chopped cilantro
- ¼ cup sliced basil
- ¼ cup salted peanuts, crushed and toasted

- ✓ Watermelon not only **keeps dehydration at bay** in summers but also provides your body with powerful antioxidants and essential vitamins.
- ✓ Cucumbers Hydrates and Detoxifies Your body. Cucumber is made up of 95 per cent water and hence is super hydrating.
- ✓ Consuming ripe Mango can also help in heat stroke as **it provides a cooling effect in the body** due to its Sita (cooling) property.
- ✓ Peppers have a chemical called capsaicin that **triggers the nerves that make your body feel warmer**, so you sweat to cool it back down.



Skin Cancer Prevention Techniques for Outdoor Workers

Outdoor workers are at an extremely high risk for overexposure from the sun. In fact, skin cancer accounts for almost half of all cancers diagnosed in the United States every year. As many tasks in the agricultural industry require outdoor work, it is crucial to your employees' health that they are protected from the sun while on the job.

As a result of being exposed to the sun's rays at high levels and frequency, many agricultural workers develop skin cancer sometime in their life. And due in part to the fact that various detrimental effects of sun exposure occur later in life, many workers do not take the necessary precautions to protect themselves against the sun's dangerous rays during their younger years. If the workers at your organization are doing any of the following, they are putting themselves at high risk for developing skin cancer:

- Not wearing sunscreen
- Not applying sunscreen frequently enough
- Not wearing polarized eye protection
- Incurring frequent sunburn
- Wearing minimal upper body clothing when working in warmer temperatures
- Not fully comprehending the dangers of the sun

As an employer, you can take an active role in helping your employees prevent skin cancer.

Safety Techniques

Take steps to ensure that your employees are adequately protected from the sun no matter the weather. To do so, consider providing sunscreen for all of your employees at no charge. Storing it in multiple locations in working areas, will further enhance its usage.

Implementing a Uniform and Sun Protection Policy

In addition to these general safeguards, consider implementing a uniform and sun protection policy at your organization, and maintain strict enforcement. Include the following provisions in your policy:

- Shirts must be worn at all times.
- In areas where hard hats are not required, a hat that will protect the face from the sun must be worn when workers are exposed to the sun for more than 20 minutes.

These safeguards will not only protect your workers against skin exposure to the sun, it may help to counter the exhaustion and fatigue that many suffer when working outside in warm weather for long periods of time.



- In working areas where an umbrella, tarp or other form of sun protection is provided, this defense must always be used.
- In areas where eye protection is not already required, sunglasses must always be worn to prevent eye damage.
- Sunscreen must be applied every hour to all exposed areas of the skin.

These safeguards ensure that the upper bodies of your workers (with the exception of necks and lower arms) are adequately protected from the sun at all times. And these safeguards will not only protect against skin exposure to the sun, they may also counter the exhaustion and fatigue that many suffer when being outside in warm weather for long periods of time. Following uniform requirements also ensures that the public can quickly and easily identify workers – a great worker injury prevention technique.

Avoiding Poisonous Plants on the Job

Know what to look for to prevent discomfort

How Are Plants Dangerous?

Unlike non-poisonous plants, poison oak, ivy and sumac contain a chemical called urushiol, which causes rashes, blisters and constant itching. This chemical is found inside of the plants, so brushing against them won't cause a negative reaction. Unfortunately, most plants are damaged or broken due to wind and animals exposing the urushiol. Urushiol can stick to your tools and your clothing, so when you touch these items, you may experience a reaction. Urushiol that rubs off from plants onto other objects can remain potent for years, depending on your environment.

What do Poisonous Plants look Like?

Poison Ivy

- Grows near lakes and streams in the Midwest and East
- Has a woody, rope-like vine, a trailing shrub on the ground or a free-standing shrub
- Normally have three leaves but could have more, which are green in the summer and red in the fall. Also have yellow or green flowers and white berries.

Poison Sumac

- Grows in boggy areas, especially in the Southeast
- Grows as a shrub up to 15 feet tall with seven to 13 smooth-edged leaves. Also has a glossy, pale yellow or cream-colored berry.

Poison Oak

- Grows as a low shrub from New Jersey to Texas and as a tall vine along the Pacific coast
- Contains oak-like leaves in clusters of three with clumps of yellow berries

Treatment

- Cleanse exposed skin with rubbing alcohol and wash with the area with water. Then, take a shower with soap and warm water. Do not use soap until the second washing, because you could initially move the urushiol around on the skin with the soap.
- Wipe clothing, shoes, tools, etc. off with rubbing alcohol and water. Always wear gloves and throw them away when you are done.
- Redness and swelling can appear within 12 to 48 hours after exposure, and blisters and itching may accompany it. The reaction should disappear within 14 to 20 days without treatment, but your body's response to urushiol is often difficult to manage without treatment. Use a wet compress and take an oral antihistamine for relief. You can also use a topical hydrocortisone on the affected area to relieve itching.



Poison Ivy

Poison Sumac

Poison Oak

Do Not Burn These Poisonous Plants

Particles of urushiol remain in the fire's smoke and can severely aggravate your eyes, nose and respiratory tract, as well as your skin. Instead of burning it to get rid of it, dig out the plant, getting as much of the root as possible, and throw it away.

Keep Grass Clippings off the Streets!



Clippings act as a natural mulch which **helps conserve soil moisture**, preventing the lawn from drought stress



Keeping grass clippings in the lawn **recycles nutrients the lawn needs** to stay healthy

Sweeping grass clippings into the street can cause...



Bacteria Growth in receiving water bodies



Penalties. It is **illegal** to litter in the streets – grass clippings included



Storm water system clogs which can lead to **flooding**



Safety Hazards for motorists



Pesticides & chemicals runoff into storm water drains, causing more filtration needs

SAVE THE DATE



Mark your calendars! **Safe + Sound Week will take place from August 15-21, 2022.** Safe + Sound Week is a nationwide event held each August that recognizes the successes of workplace health and safety programs and offers information and ideas on how to keep America's workers safe. Registration for Safe + Sound Week opens in early July. The Save the Date is available to download in both English and Spanish. We look forward to your participation.

WHAT DO YOU HEAR
IF YOU TAKE A
CONSTRUCTION WORKER'S
HAT OFF AND HOLD IT
TO YOUR EAR?



THE OSHA.