

CA Summertime ... And It's A Hot One!

Cal/OSHA's Heat Illness Prevention Requirements for Outdoor Work Sites



With the heat of summer in full swing, California employers covered by [California Code of Regulations, Title 8, Section 3395](#) with employees who work outdoors may want to review their practices to ensure that they are complying with Cal/OSHA's heat illness prevention requirements. Of course, this is a year-round requirement, but with the high heat conditions, there is special enforcement activity by Cal/OSHA.

Free, Cool Water

Employers in the state of California must provide water to employees working outdoors. This water must be provided to employees "free of charge" and also must be "fresh, pure, [and] suitably cool." The employer must provide each employee with at least "one quart [of water] per employee per hour of work."

Access to Shade

California employers are also required to provide actual shade for employees. Shade is required when the temperature in the work area exceeds 80 degrees. Enough shade must be provided so that employees on rest or meal periods can sit normally without touching each other. The law also requires that employers provide "timely access to shade upon an employee's request" even if the temperature does not exceed 80 degrees.

Under the law, "Shade means blockage of direct sunlight ... Shade is not adequate when heat in the area of shade defeats the purpose of shade, which is to allow the body to cool ... Shade may be provided by any natural or artificial means that does not expose employees to unsafe or unhealthy conditions and that does not deter or discourage access or use."

High-Heat Procedures

Covered California employers (such as construction, agriculture, landscapers) must implement "high-heat procedures" when the temperature equals or exceeds 95 degrees. Some of those procedures include:

- Ensuring effective communication perhaps using electronic means;
- Observing employees by assigning someone to monitor them for symptoms of heat illness or implementing a buddy system;
- Reminding employees to drink the fresh, pure, and suitably cool water you have provided for them;
- Conducting pre-shift meetings to discuss high-heat procedures.

Training

All employees who work outdoors must be trained about heat illness and its signs, as well as, how to prevent heat illness **before they start work**. Supervisors must also be trained on their responsibilities to observe

employees and how to summon emergency medical help when needed.

Emergency Response Procedures

Covered employers must have an emergency plan in place in case of heat illness. The employer must have a reliable means of summoning emergency services. When contact is established, the employer must ensure that clear and precise directions to the work site can be provided to emergency responders. If necessary, the employer should be prepared to transport the employee to a place where he or she can be reached by an emergency medical provider. If an employee has signs of severe heat illness, the employer must implement the emergency response procedure.

Acclimatization

Employers in California are required by law to let employees “acclimatize,” or get used to working in the heat, while being closely monitored. California law requires that an employee who has been newly assigned to a high-heat area be closely observed by a supervisor or designee for the first 14 days of the employee’s employment. Even if the employee is not new, the law requires that all employees shall be closely observed by a supervisor or designee during a heat wave. A “heat wave” means “any day in which the predicted high temperature for the day will be at least 80 degrees Fahrenheit and at least ten degrees Fahrenheit higher than the average high daily temperature in the preceding five days.”

Heat Illness Prevention Plan

Covered employers must develop and implement written, effective heat illness prevention plans.

A plan should include:

1. Procedures for providing sufficient water
2. Procedures for providing access to shade
3. High-heat procedures
4. Emergency response procedures
5. Acclimatization methods and procedures

These regulations are for your protection and your employees as well. Enforcement of these Cal/OSHA Heat Illness laws is more intense than ever, which means that employers cannot afford to ignore them!

Can you demonstrate that you've made a Good-Faith-Effort to train work safety or workplace injury prevention to employees? Our easy-to-use Training Programs help you to comply with OSHA regulations. The team at Cal Work Safety has the background & experience to help you to take the right steps to keep you in compliance.

Check Out our Heat Illness Prevention & Treatment Video: <https://youtu.be/YnrwrewOaGE>

Also see [OSHA video](#)

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