



## 8 Steps to Keep Workers Safe in the Heat

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**Keep workers safe in hot weather with water, rest and shade.**



### **California employers are required to take these four steps to prevent heat illness:**

1. Training: Train all employees and supervisors about heat illness prevention.
2. Water: Provide enough fresh water so that each employee can drink at least 1 quart per hour, or four 8 ounce glasses, of water per hour, and *encourage them to do so*.
3. Shade: Provide access to shade and encourage employees to take a cool-down rest in the shade for at least 5 minutes. *They should not wait until they feel sick to cool down*.
4. Planning: Develop and implement written procedures for complying with the Cal/OSHA [Heat Illness Prevention Standard](#).

Forecasters are calling for above-average temperatures across much of the country this summer. Are you prepared to beat the heat? Every year, thousands of workers become ill from working in the heat, and some even die

Construction workers make up about one-third of heat-related worker deaths, but outdoor workers in every industry – particularly agriculture, landscaping, transportation, and oil and gas operations – are at risk when temperatures go up. Heat-related illnesses and deaths can be prevented.

Employers and supervisors can save the lives of workers in hot environments by following these eight simple steps:

**Institute a heat acclimatization plan and medical monitoring program.** Closely supervise new employees for the first 14 days or until they are fully acclimatized. Most heat-related worker deaths occur in the first 3 days on the job and more than a third occur on the very first day. New and temporary workers are disproportionately affected. If someone has not worked in hot weather for at least a week, their body needs time to adjust.

**Encourage workers to drink about 1 cup of water every 15-20 minutes.** During prolonged sweating lasting several hours, they should drink sports beverages containing balanced electrolytes.

**Provide shaded or air-conditioned rest areas for cooling down,** and empower workers to use them.

**Provide workers with protective equipment and clothing** (such as water-cooled garments, air-cooled garments, hats, ice-packet vests, wetted over-garments, and heat-reflective aprons or suits).

**Be familiar with heat illness signs and symptoms,** and make sure your employees are, too. Some heat exhaustion signs are dizziness, headaches, cramps, sweaty skin, nausea and vomiting, weakness and a fast heartbeat. Heat stroke symptoms include red, hot, dry skin; convulsions; fainting; and confusion. In general, fainting and confusion represent an emergency and should trigger the call for professional evaluation.

**Encourage workers to recognize heat illness symptoms** and notify a supervisor or medical professional if they or other coworkers are showing signs. Implement a buddy system where workers observe each other for early signs and symptoms of heat intolerance.

**Download OSHA's Heat Safety Tool on your iPhone or Android device to help calculate the heat index,** ([https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/heatillness/heat\\_index/heat\\_app.html](https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/heatillness/heat_index/heat_app.html)) a measurement of how it feels when considering humidity. The app provides specific recommendations for preventing heat illness based on the estimated risk level where you are working.

**Know what to do in an emergency. Employees should call a supervisor for help. If a supervisor is not available, call 911. Have someone stay with the worker until help arrives.**

More resources are available on OSHA's website in English and Spanish. Remember: "Water. Rest. Shade." can prevent heat illness and save lives.

<https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/heatstress/index.html>