Outdoor Heat Exposure Prevention: Employer Responsibilities

Washington’s Outdoor Heat Exposure rules require employers with outdoor workers to take steps to prevent heat-related illness when the temperature is 89 degrees Fahrenheit or higher. Additional steps are required when the temperature is 100 degrees or higher. Employers are responsible for monitoring temperatures so they are prepared when trigger temperatures are met.

Water

- Provide enough drinking water for each worker to drink at least 1 quart (four 8 ounce glasses) per hour, and encourage them to do so.
  - Access to water is required regardless of temperature. At 89 degrees or higher, specific quantities are required.
- Ensure drinking water is suitably cool to drink and readily accessible to workers at all times.

Shade and Rest

- Provide workers access to shade for preventative cool-down rest when needed. Workers should not wait until they feel sick to cool down.
- If the temperature is 100 degrees or higher, employers must ensure there is enough cooling shade at all times to accommodate all workers on a break at any time, and must ensure mandatory preventative cool-down rest periods of at least ten minutes every two hours.

- In order to be cooling, shade must block direct sunlight and not be in areas where the heat defeats the purpose of the shade, such as in a car without running air conditioning or shade provided by crops where heat and moisture are trapped in the area.
- Both preventative cool-down rest time and mandatory preventative cool-down rest periods must be paid unless taken during a meal period.
- Alternative cooling methods may be used instead of shade, such as temperature-controlled environments like air-conditioned trailers or misting stations.

Identify and Respond to Signs and Symptoms of Heat-Related Illness

- Respond to workers showing signs and symptoms of heat-related illness by relieving them from duty, providing shade or other sufficient means to cool down, and monitoring to determine whether medical attention is necessary.
- Develop and implement procedures to identify workers showing signs and symptoms of heat-related illness, including workers working alone. Effective procedures include:
  - Observing workers for alertness and signs or symptoms of heat-related illness. Observation can be done by a supervisor or by other workers when assigned to watch out for each other as part of a buddy system.

1. The outdoor temperature action is lower in cases where double layer clothing and non-breathing clothing or personal protective equipment is worn.
- Monitoring workers through regular communication, such as radio or cellular, including workers that are working alone or performing duties in areas where observation is not possible.

- Ensure effective procedures for obtaining emergency medical services when needed. Time is critical.

**Planning and Training**

- Develop and implement an outdoor heat exposure safety plan as part of the written Accident Prevention Plan.

- Train all workers and supervisors about heat-related illnesses and the company’s outdoor heat exposure plan.

For more information on requirements and best practices for preventing heat-related illness, see the DOSH Hazard Alert, *Outdoor Workers at Increased Risk for Heat Illness and Death During Extreme Heat Events*, at [www.Lni.wa.gov/HazardAlerts](http://www.Lni.wa.gov/HazardAlerts).