

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 Fahrenheit¹ 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.

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