

Heat Illness Prevention

What you need to know



For over a decade, California employers have been required to take steps to prevent employees working outside from developing heat illness. Over the years, this regulation has been strengthened to provide more safeguards for employees. Requirements go into affect when the temperature **exceeds 80° F**, and specific high heat procedures are implemented when the temperature **equals or exceeds 95° F**. It is imperative that managers and supervisors understand what is required and ensure they are taking the steps necessary to protect workers.

WATER REQUIREMENTS

- “Fresh, pure, and suitably cool”
- Located as close as practicable to areas where employees are working
- At no cost to the employee
- Enough water to allow each employee to drink at least one quart per hour

SHADE REQUIREMENTS

- One or more areas with shade at all times located as close to employees as practicable
- Accommodate all employees on recovery or rest periods and those onsite taking meal periods
- Large enough so employees can sit in a normal posture fully in the shade without having to be in physical contact with each other

For more information go to Cal/OSHA’s Heat Illness Information page at

[CA Heat Illness Prevention Information Page](#)

[CA Heat Illness Regulation - 3395](#)

PREVENTIVE COOL DOWN PERIOD

- Allow and encourage employees to take preventative cool-down rests in the shade whenever they feel the need to protect themselves from overheating
- Monitor employees taking a preventative cool-down rest. The supervisor must:
 - ✓ Ask the employee what heat illness symptoms they are experiencing
 - ✓ Encourage the employee to remain in the shade
 - ✓ Not order the employee back to work until the symptoms are gone
 - ✓ Provide appropriate first aid or emergency response if the employee is exhibiting symptoms of heat illness

ACCLIMATIZATION PROCEDURES

- Maintain close observation of all employees during a “heat wave” - any day in which the predicted high temperature is at least 80°F and is 10° higher than the daily average in the preceding 5 days
- Closely observe any employee newly assigned to outdoor work during first 2 weeks on the job

TRAINING

- Heat exposures specific to the employee’s tasks, operations, and PPE/clothing requirements
- Importance of drinking water throughout the day
- Access to shade and taking rest/recovery breaks
- Types of heat illness and the signs and symptoms
- What to do if feeling symptoms
- When to report signs and symptoms for themselves and co-workers
- Emergency medical response procedures
- Your written Heat Illness Prevention Plan

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HIGH HEAT PROCEDURES

- Triggered at 95°F
- Have pre-shift meetings to review high heat procedures and encourage drinking water and taking cool-down breaks
- Have a process for observing and monitoring employees, which may include supervisor observation (20 or fewer employees), a mandatory buddy system (more than 20 employees), or regular communication with employees who work alone
- Have effective means of communication so employees can contact a supervisor when necessary
- Designate at least one employee on each worksite who is authorized to call for emergency services
- Allow other employees to summon help if no designated employee is available

People suffering from a serious heat illness may be confused and not know they are in danger. Make sure employees watch each other for the signs of heat illness and act immediately if they think a co-worker is in danger.

More training resources can be found at riskcontrol.yorkrisk.com including a Safety Talk *Chill Out – Protecting Yourself from Heat Illness* and streaming video – *Heat Stress: Real Accidents, Real Stories*

Also available - Sample Heat Illness Prevention Program

HEAT ILLNESS – QUICK REVIEW

Four types of heat illness

1. Heat Rash
2. Heat Cramps
3. Heat Exhaustion
4. Heat Stroke

Heat exhaustion is serious, and you to get medical help immediately. The signs of heat exhaustion include:

- Cool, pale, clammy skin
- Heavy sweating
- Fatigue or weakness
- Shortness of breath
- Headache
- Dizziness or fainting
- Nausea or vomiting
- Rapid heartbeat and breathing
- Thirst
- Irritability

Don't leave the person. Move them to a cool place to rest. Remove as much clothing as possible. Have them drink water and electrolytes. Apply cool water or ice packs to the body. **Seek medical help**

Heat stroke is the most serious stage of heat illness, and the victim will die unless treated promptly.

Signs may include:

- Dizziness/light headedness - headache
- Behavioral changes – confusion, disorientation, staggering
- Red, hot, dry skin – very little sweating
- Nausea or vomiting
- Rapid pulse
- High body temperature, 105° F or higher

Call 9-1-1 immediately and get the victim into a cool area, fan vigorously. Apply cool water to clothing or skin, and apply ice packs under arms and to the groin area.