

Alert | OSHA



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Federal OSHA Emphasizes Heat-Related Illnesses and Injuries in the Workplace

The federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) **announced on April 12, 2022**, that it is launching a **national emphasis program** (the Program) focused on heat-related illnesses and injuries. Although OSHA currently enforces heat-hazard violations with the General Duty Clause, it intends to roll out a permanent standard that will apply to indoor and outdoor workplaces in the general industry and construction fields. In the interim, however, OSHA will focus on heat hazards through the Program, which provides policies and procedures for OSHA's targeted enforcement efforts to protect employees.

The Program is directed toward employers in 70 high-risk industries. OSHA's Compliance Safety and Health Officers (CSHO) will inspect indoor and outdoor work sites proactively, without receiving an injury report, complaint, or referral. Inspections will occur when the National Weather Service issues a heat advisory or warning for the local area. On days when the heat index is 80°F or higher, OSHA's personnel will conduct direct outreach to stakeholders such as unions and safety organizations, to ensure workers remain safe on the job. The Program also directs CSHOs to conduct inspections of outdoor work areas in plain view on especially warm days.

OSHA's enforcement guidance requires CSHOs to include in their inspections a review of OSHA 300 Logs and 301 Incident Reports and interviews with workers to spot the symptoms of heat illness, such as headache, dizziness, fainting, and dehydration. CSHOs also are to determine if an employer has a heat illness and injury prevention program and evaluate the same.

Employers may wish to timely review the Program to understand what OSHA intends to focus on during a heat-related inspection. Employers in the 70 high-risk industries also may consider developing a heat illness and injury prevention program and, to that end, the Program contains detailed guidance on what such a program should include.

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