

N E W S R E L E A S E

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Cal/OSHA Urges Employers with Outdoor Workers to Prepare for Heat Season Now

Oakland—Cal/OSHA is urging employers with outdoor workers to prepare for high heat now. According to the National Climatic Data Center, 2014 was the hottest calendar year on record since 1895 in California, and the Center has already recorded similarly record-breaking temperatures over the last two months. Preparation is essential to prevent heat illness which can include headaches, fatigue, excessive sweating and muscle cramps in the early stages, and can rapidly progress to mental confusion, vomiting, fainting, seizures and death.

“Employers must ensure they take the steps necessary to protect outdoor workers, especially during times of high heat,” said Christine Baker, Director of the Department of Industrial Relations. Cal/OSHA is a division within DIR.

Employers are required to take the following minimum, basic steps:

- Train all employees and supervisors about heat illness prevention.
- Provide employees with enough cool, fresh water to drink at least 1 quart per hour, and *encourage them to do so*.
- Provide access to shaded areas, and encourage employees to take rest breaks of at least 5 minutes – *before they feel any sickness*.
- Develop and implement written procedures – in English and other languages as necessary – for complying with Cal/OSHA’s [Heat Illness Prevention Standard](#).

“California has the most extensive heat illness prevention requirements in the country,” said Cal/OSHA Chief Juliann Sum. “The goal is to ensure that outdoor workers are not risking their health.”

Employers must also take special protective measures when temperatures reach 95 degrees or above. Supervisors must:

- Observe workers for signs of heat illness.
- Provide close supervision of workers in their first 14 days of employment (to ensure acclimatization).

- Have effective communication systems in place for calling emergency responders if necessary.

An amended heat regulation has been proposed by the Occupational Safety & Health Standards Board. The board has requested that the amendments be approved by the Office of Administrative Law with an effective date of May 1, 2015 – in time for this year’s growing season. The [proposed amended regulation](#) and [guidance on the amendments](#) are posted on DIR’s website.

Cal/OSHA offers additional information and resources on [heat illness prevention](#) online, with illustrated heat illness fact sheets, videos and training kits available in multiple languages. The online resources include details on free training for all employers with outdoor worksites in both Northern and Southern California.

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The [California Department of Industrial Relations](#), established in 1927, protects and improves the health, safety, and economic well-being of over 18 million wage earners, and helps their employers comply with state labor laws. DIR is housed within the [Labor & Workforce Development Agency](#). For non-media inquiries, contact DIR’s Communications Call Center at 1-844-LABOR-DIR (1-844-522-6734) for help in locating the appropriate [division or program](#) in our department