

## N E W S   R E L E A S E

News Release No.: 2016-37

Date: April 11, 2016

### Cal/OSHA Urges Employers to Protect Outdoor Workers from Record-Breaking Heat Wave

Fresno—California heat of the past several years has shattered [temperature records](#) going back more than 100 years. With this year's heat season approaching, Cal/OSHA hosted a news conference today to remind employers that prevention is the best defense for outdoor workers against heat-related illness and death.

A key component to Cal/OSHA's prevention model includes annual trainings statewide in both [English](#) and [Spanish](#). Two bilingual trainings, co-sponsored by the Nisei Farmers League and 11 other agricultural employers, were held today in Easton. The trainings highlight the need to protect outdoor workers from heat illness and the requirements under California's heat illness standard.

"Employers at outdoor worksites must know the steps to take to prevent heat illness injuries on the job," said Cal/OSHA Chief Juliann Sum. "Cal/OSHA continues to focus on training and outreach, combined with enforcement targeting those employers who put their workers' safety at risk."

The risk of heat illness is generally highest for people who work outdoors. Therefore, Cal/OSHA's approach to prevention includes inspections at outdoor worksites in industries such as agriculture, landscaping and construction during heat season. These targeted inspections check for compliance with the [heat illness prevention standard](#) and the [injury and illness prevention standard](#), which require employers to take the following basic precautions:

1. Train all employees and supervisors on heat illness prevention.
2. Provide enough fresh water so that each employee can drink at least 1 quart per hour, or four 8-ounce glasses of water per hour, and *encourage them to do so*.
3. Provide access to shade and encourage employees to take a cool-down rest in the shade for at least 5 minutes. They should not wait until they feel sick to cool down. *Shade structures must be in place when temperatures exceed 80 degrees Fahrenheit, or upon request.*
4. Closely observe all employees during a heat wave and any employee newly assigned to a high heat area. Lighter work, frequent breaks or shorter hours will help employees who have not been working in high temperatures adapt to the new conditions.

5. Develop and implement written procedures for complying with the Cal/OSHA Heat Illness Prevention Standard, including plans on how to handle medical emergencies and steps to take if someone shows signs or symptoms of heat illness.

The most frequent violation that Cal/OSHA cites during targeted heat inspections is for failure to have a proper written heat illness prevention plan specific to the worksite. Serious violations are often related to inadequate access to water and shade, and to a lack of supervisor and employee training.

To remain in compliance with the standard, Cal/OSHA encourages employers and worker supervisors to learn more about the standard, which was updated in 2015. Please refer to the [Cal/OSHA guidance on the new requirements](#) and the [Heat Illness Prevention Enforcement Q&A](#) for more information on the updates.

Additional information about heat illness prevention, including details on upcoming training sessions throughout the state can be found on Cal/OSHA's [Heat Illness Prevention](#) page. Cal/OSHA also has extensive multi-lingual materials for employers, workers and trainers on its [Water. Rest. Shade.](#) public awareness campaign website.

Questions related to heat illness prevention should be directed to [Cal/OSHA's Consultation Services Branch](#), which provides free and voluntary assistance to employers and employee organizations to improve their health and safety programs. Employers should call (800) 963-9424 for assistance from Cal/OSHA Consultation Services.

Employees with work-related questions or complaints may contact DIR's Call Center in English or Spanish at 844-LABOR-DIR (844-522-6734). The California Workers' Information line at 866-924-9757 provides recorded information in English and Spanish on a variety of work-related topics. Complaints can also be filed confidentially with [Cal/OSHA district offices](#).

Members of the press may contact Julia Bernstein or Peter Melton at (510) 286-1161 with questions or to arrange interviews. The public is also encouraged to [subscribe to get email alerts](#) on DIR's press releases or other departmental updates.

###



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 general inquiries, contact DIR's Communications Call Center at 844-LABOR-DIR (844-522-6734) for help in locating the appropriate [division or program](#) in our department.