

N E W S R E L E A S E

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Cal/OSHA Issues First High Heat Advisory of 2014 as Temperatures Rise Across the State

Oakland— Cal/OSHA is advising all employers to protect their outdoor workers from the risks associated with heat illness. Beginning mid-week, temperatures are expected to be 15 to 25 degrees above normal in both northern and southern California.

“With the first significant heat wave of the year expected this week and into the weekend, we want to make sure employers know their responsibilities and what is needed for outdoor workers to avoid heat illness,” said Christine Baker, director of the Department of Industrial Relations (DIR). The Division of Occupational Safety and Health, commonly known as Cal/OSHA, is a division of DIR.

“Early in the season, especially as the temperatures spike, all workers, regardless of fitness, should be given the opportunity to acclimatize to handle heat stress and prevent serious injuries from heat illness,” said acting Cal/OSHA Chief Juliann Sum.

California’s heat regulation requires all employers with outdoor workers to take basic steps to protect outdoor workers:

- Train all employees and supervisors about heat illness prevention.
- Provide plenty of cool, fresh water and encourage employees to drink water frequently.
- Provide a shaded area for workers to take a cool down recovery break.
- Prepare an emergency heat illness prevention plan for the worksite, with training for supervisors and workers on the steps to take if a worker shows signs or symptoms of heat illness.

It is recommended that employers take steps to help their workers acclimatize, or get used to working outdoors in the heat. Acclimatization is important for new workers and for everyone during times of high heat.

“Extra attention and training should focus on work pace, water, shade, and rest breaks. Workers should be encouraged to report any symptoms promptly to avoid the progression of mild heat illness to more serious heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Focusing on preventive measures is the best way to keeping the workforce healthy and productive,” added acting Chief Sum.

Special “High Heat” procedures are also required when temperatures reach 95 degrees and workers are at greater risk. At these times, supervisors must take extra precautions:

- Observe workers for signs and symptoms of heat illness.
- Remind workers to drink water frequently.
- Provide close supervision of workers in the first 14 days of their employment (to ensure acclimatization).
- Have effective communication systems in place to be able to summon emergency assistance if necessary.

Cal/OSHA will inspect worksites in outdoor industries such as agriculture, construction, landscaping, and others throughout the heat season. Through partnerships with various employer and worker organizations in different industries, Cal/OSHA will also provide consultation, outreach and training on heat illness prevention.

Cal/OSHA takes a comprehensive approach to preventing heat illness among outdoor workers. Its award-winning heat illness prevention campaign, the first of its kind in the nation, includes enforcement of heat regulations as well as outreach and training for California’s employers and workers.

Online information on the heat illness prevention requirements and training materials can be obtained at [Cal/OSHA’s Heat Illness web page](#) or the [Water. Rest. Shade.](#) campaign site. A [Heat Illness Prevention e-tool](#) is available on Cal/OSHA’s website, and more information can be found on DIR’s [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages.

Cal/OSHA’s [Consultation Program](#) provides free and voluntary assistance to employers and employee organizations to improve their health and safety programs. For assistance from the Cal/OSHA Consultation Program, employers can call (800) 963-9424.

Employees with workplace safety questions or complaints, including heat illness, can contact the [Cal/OSHA district office](#) in their region to file a confidential report. Recorded messages in English and Spanish detailing resources for California workers are also available toll free at 1-866-924-9757.

For media inquiries, contact Erika Monterroza at (510) 286-1164 or Peter Melton at (510) 286-7046.

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