

N E W S R E L E A S E

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Cal/OSHA Stresses Importance of Monitoring Workers, Recognizing Early Symptoms of Heat Illness as Central Valley Swelters

Oakland—Cal/OSHA is reminding employers to observe outdoor workers toiling in high heat for signs and symptoms of heat illness. [The National Weather Service is forecasting dangerous heat](#) for much of the Central Valley for the rest of this week.

Symptoms of overexposure to heat include headache, fatigue, dizziness, confusion, cramps, exhaustion, and fainting. Heat illness occurs when the body is unable to cool itself down when overheated.

“Exposure to heat while working outdoors can cause serious illness or death,” said Juliann Sum, Chief of Cal/OSHA. “It is important for those who work outdoors, especially during heat waves, to know how to protect themselves from heat illness.”

Cal/OSHA urges workers experiencing possible overheating to take a preventative cool-down rest in the shade until symptoms are gone. Workers who have existing health problems or medical conditions that reduce tolerance to heat, such as diabetes, need to be extra vigilant. Some high blood pressure and anti-inflammatory medications can also increase a worker’s risk for heat illness.

Staying properly hydrated throughout the workday is one of the most effective heat illness prevention techniques. Cal/OSHA encourages all workers to drink at least one quart of water every hour, preferably sipping an 8-ounce cup of water every 15 minutes. Drinks such as soda, sports drinks, coffee, energy drinks or iced tea are not recommended for hydration. Also, the lingering effects of alcoholic beverages can contribute to quickly dehydrating the body in hot weather.

In addition to the basic steps outlined by [California’s heat regulation](#) for employers with outdoor workers, heat at or above 95 degrees Fahrenheit requires [additional](#) precautions. Among other measures, it is crucial that workers are actively monitored for early signs of heat illness. This helps ensure sick employees receive treatment immediately and that the symptoms do not develop into serious illness or death.

In case a worker does get sick, supervisors and coworkers must be trained on the emergency procedures required to ensure that the sick worker receives treatment immediately and serious illness does not develop.

Cal/OSHA inspects outdoor worksites in agriculture, construction, landscaping, and other operations throughout the heat season.

Cal/OSHA's Heat Illness Prevention special emphasis program, the first of its kind in the nation, includes enforcement of heat regulations as well as multilingual outreach and training program for California's employers and workers. Online information on heat illness prevention requirements and training materials are available on Cal/OSHA's [Heat Illness Prevention web page](#) and the [Water. Rest. Shade. campaign site](#). A [Heat Illness Prevention e-tool](#) is also available on Cal/OSHA's website.

Cal/OSHA helps protect workers from health and safety hazards on the job in almost every workplace in California. Employers and workers who have questions or need assistance with workplace health and safety programs can call [Cal/OSHA's Consultation Services Branch](#) at 800-963-9424.

Complaints about workplace safety and health hazards can be filed confidentially with [Cal/OSHA district offices](#). Employees with work-related questions or complaints may contact DIR's Call Center in English or Spanish at 844-LABOR-DIR (844-522-6734).

Members of the press may contact Peter Melton or Paola Laverde at (510) 286-1161, and are encouraged to [subscribe to get email alerts](#) on DIR's press releases or other departmental updates.

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