



HEAT ILLNESS PREVENTION

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It's that time of the year....not post tax season...
Heat Illness Prevention season!

With the change in seasons comes the warmer weather and it is imperative (And required by Cal/OSHA) that all employers train their supervisors and employees on heat illness prevention. The safety of your employees is the responsibility of the employer and if an unfortunate event does occur, Cal/OSHA may be investigating the event. If so, they will be asking if you have your Heat Illness Prevention Program in place. The investigation will include verification that you have provided training to your supervisors and employees.

A Cal/OSHA study identified the key role that employers play in preventing worker fatalities due to heat illness. The findings highlighted the value of training supervisors so that they can make the fullest use of their power to control safety on the job.

California Code of Regulations, Title 8, Section 3395 Heat Illness Prevention requires all employers to have a Heat Illness Prevention Program which includes the following:

Provide fresh/potable drinking water

Employers must provide employees with fresh, pure, and suitably cool water, free of charge. Enough water must be provided for each employee to drink at least one quart, or four 8-ounce glasses, per hour and the water must be located as close as practicable to the work area.

Employers are also required to encourage employees to drink water frequently

Provide access to shade

When temperatures exceed 80 degrees, employees must be provided shade at all times in an area that is ventilated, cooled, or open to air and that is as close as practicable to the work area. There must be sufficient space provided in the shade to accommodate all employees taking rest. When temperatures do not exceed 80 degrees, employees must be provided timely access to shade upon request. Employees should be allowed and encouraged to take preventative cool-down rest as needed, for at least 5 minutes per rest needed.

Have high heat procedures in place

High heat procedures are required of agricultural employers when temperatures exceed 95 degrees. The procedures must provide for the maintenance of effective communication with supervisors at all times, observance of employees for symptoms of heat illness, procedures for calling for emergency medical services, reminders for employees to drink water, pre-shift meetings to review heat procedures and the encouragement of employees to drink plenty of water and take preventative cool-down rest as needed. Agricultural employers must additionally ensure employees take, at a minimum, one 10-minute preventative cool-down rest period every two hours in periods of high heat.

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