

FACT SHEET

Heat Injury and Illness Prevention in Outdoor and Indoor Work Settings



Why a Standard is Needed:

Heat is the leading cause of weather-related deaths in the United States. Excessive heat in the workplace can cause a number of adverse health effects, including heat stroke and even death, if not treated properly. While heat hazards impact workers in many industries, workers of color have a higher likelihood of working in jobs with hazardous heat exposure. OSHA is issuing a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) titled *Heat Injury and Illness Prevention in Outdoor and Indoor Work Settings*, a significant step toward a federal heat standard, which proposes protective measures that the agency has preliminarily determined would significantly reduce heat-related injuries, illnesses, and fatalities in the workplace. An unofficial version is now available for viewing at www.osha.gov/heat-exposure/rulemaking. The official version will be published in the Federal Register soon and there will be a public comment period for stakeholders to submit comments to OSHA on the proposed standard.

Scope of the Standard:

The proposed standard would apply to all employers conducting outdoor and indoor work in all general industry, construction, maritime, and agriculture sectors where OSHA has jurisdiction. OSHA is proposing to exclude from the rule: short duration employee exposures to heat, emergency response activities, work at indoor sites kept below 80°F, telework, and indoor sedentary work activities. The proposed standard would more clearly set employer obligations and the measures necessary to effectively protect employees from hazardous heat. Employers would be required to create a plan to evaluate and control heat hazards in their workplace.

What the Standard Requires:

The proposed standard would require employers to:

- Develop and implement a work site heat injury and illness prevention plan (HIIPP) with site-specific information to evaluate and control heat hazards in their workplace.
- Identify heat hazards in both outdoor and indoor work sites.
 - For outdoor work sites, employers would be required to monitor heat conditions by tracking local heat index forecasts or measuring heat index or wet bulb globe temperature.
 - For indoor work sites, employers would be required to identify work areas with the potential for hazardous heat exposure, develop and implement a monitoring plan, and seek employee input.
- Implement control measures at or above the Initial Heat Trigger (i.e., a **heat index of 80°F** or a wet bulb globe temperature equal to the NIOSH Recommended Action Limit) that include providing employees:
 - cool drinking water;
 - break areas with cooling measures;
 - indoor work area controls;
 - acclimatization protocols for new and returning unacclimatized employees;
 - paid rest breaks **if needed** to prevent overheating; and
 - regular and effective two-way communication.
- Implement additional control measures at or above the High Heat Trigger (i.e., **heat index of 90°F** or wet bulb globe temperature equal to the NIOSH Recommended Exposure Limit) that include providing employees:
 - **mandatory** rest breaks of 15 minutes at least every two hours (unpaid meal break may count as a rest break);
 - observation for signs and symptoms of heat-related illness;
 - a hazard alert to remind employees of key parts of the HIIPP; and
 - warning signs at indoor work areas with ambient temperatures that regularly exceed 120°F.

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- Take steps if an employee is experiencing signs and symptoms of a heat-related illness or a heat emergency, and develop a heat emergency response plan.
- Provide initial and annual refresher training for supervisors, heat safety coordinators, and employees, as well as supplemental training after changes in exposure to heat hazards, policies and procedures, or the occurrence of a heat injury or illness.
- Have and maintain, for a minimum of six months, written or electronic records of indoor monitoring data.
- Ensure that all requirements are at no cost to employees.

These requirements of the proposed standard are summarized in the table below:

Provision	All Covered Employers (See Scope)	At or Above Initial Heat Trigger	At or Above High Heat Trigger
Identifying heat hazards	●	●	●
Heat illness and emergency response procedures	●	●	●
Training for employees and supervisors	●	●	●
Heat injury and illness prevention plan (HIIPP)	●	●	●
Recordkeeping	●	●	●
Drinking water		■	■
Break area		■	■
Indoor work area controls		■	■
Acclimatization plan for new or returning workers		■	■
Rest breaks (if needed)		■	■
Effective communication means with employees		■	■
Rest breaks (minimum 15 minutes every 2 hours)			▲
Supervisor or buddy system to observe for signs and symptoms			▲
Hazard alert			▲

Stakeholder Participation:

OSHA encourages the public to participate in this rulemaking when the proposed standard is officially published in the Federal Register. Your input will help OSHA develop a final rule that adequately protects workers, is feasible for employers, and is based on the best available evidence. You may submit comments and attachments electronically at www.regulations.gov, Docket No. [OSHA-2021-0009](https://www.regulations.gov/docket/OSHA-2021-0009). When submitting comments or recommendations, commenters should explain their rationale and, if possible, provide data and information to support their comments or recommendations.

All comments, including any personal information you provide, will be placed in the public docket without change and, with the exception of copyrighted materials, will be publicly available online at www.regulations.gov. Therefore, OSHA cautions commenters about submitting information they do not want to be made available to the public or submitting materials that contain personal information (either about themselves or others) such as Social Security Numbers, birthdates or confidential medical information. All comments and submissions are listed in the www.regulations.gov index; however, some information (e.g., copyrighted material) is not publicly available to read or download through that website. All submissions, including copyrighted material, are available for inspection at the OSHA Docket Office. Contact the OSHA Docket Office at 202-693-2350 (TTY number: 877-889-5627) for assistance in locating docket submissions.

For more information on how to engage with this stage of the rulemaking process, visit: <https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/rulemakingprocess#v-nav-tab2>.