



Heat Illness Regulation Changes



Anticipated Effective Date
May 1, 2015

SAFETY COMMUNICATION

The Occupational Safety & Health Standards Board (OSHSB) voted to adopt significant changes to California’s Heat Illness Prevention regulation. The regulation includes new requirements for water and shade in normal and high-heat environments. It also adds new language on emergency response procedures, acclimatization and training. The Office of Administrative Law (OAL) still needs to approve the changes, but OSHSB has requested an effective date of May 1, 2015, in order to be enforceable before the start of summer.

WHAT’S CHANGED?

- **WATER**
Water must be “fresh, pure, and suitably cool” and located as close as practicable to areas where employees are working. Water must be provided *at no cost* to the employee. The amount of water required (at least one quart per hour) has not changed.
- **SHADE**
Shade must now be available at **80° Fahrenheit** (NOT 85° as before). It must accommodate all employees on recovery or rest periods and those onsite taking meal periods. In both cases the shaded area must be large enough so employees can sit in a normal posture fully in the shade without having to be in physical contact with each other.
- **HIGH HEAT PROCEDURES**
Remain triggered at **95°**. Employers will need to conduct pre-shift meetings to review high heat procedures and encourage employees to drink plenty of water and take cool-down breaks. There will be mandatory supervision and monitoring of employees throughout the day, including a mandatory buddy system and regular communication with employees who work alone.
- **PREVENTIVE COOL DOWN PERIOD**
Employers are now required to monitor an employee who is taking a preventive cool-down rest. The supervisor must:
 - ✓ Ask the employee what heat illness symptoms they are experiencing
 - ✓ Encourage the employee to remain in the shade
 - ✓ Not order the employee back to work until the symptoms are gone
 - ✓ Provide appropriate first aid or emergency response if the employee is exhibiting symptoms of heat illness
- **EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROCEDURES**
The employer must now develop and implement emergency response procedures that include effective communication, response to signs and symptoms of heat illness, and procedures for contacting emergency medical services.
- **ACCLIMATIZATION PROCEDURES**
Includes close observation of all employees during a “heat wave” which, for this regulation, is defined as any day in which the predicted high temperature is at least 80° Fahrenheit and is 10° higher than the daily average in the preceding five days. Additionally, any employee who has been newly assigned to outdoor work must be closely observed their first two weeks on the job.

What to do if temperatures rise over 80° before the new requirements take effect?

The most important thing is to protect your workers, so don’t wait to train your employees! Follow the requirements in the current regulation at:

<https://www.dir.ca.gov/title8/3395.html>

Please note this information is presented in a condensed version and does not include all details about the new requirements. Once the regulation has been adopted, we will update our model Heat Illness Prevention Program, Program Development Guide, and training resources.

Follow Cal/OSHA’s progress as it unfolds at www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/HeatIllnessInfo.html.