



HEAT-ILLNESS PREVENTION TOOLKIT: OSHA COMPLIANCE & SAFETY GUIDE

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Summer heat brings serious risks to your workforce, especially in states like Texas where temperatures regularly climb into the triple digits. The U.S. Department of Labor recently updated its National Emphasis Program (NEP) to focus inspections and outreach on high-risk indoor and outdoor industries. Enforced over the next five years, these new guidelines emphasize prevention, compliance, and clear criteria for evaluating heat programs.

Heat-related illness is a severe threat to employee safety. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 43 U.S. workers died from heat-related causes in 2022, representing a 19% increase from 2021. As an employer, you have a duty to provide a safe workplace. You can mitigate these risks and reduce absenteeism by acclimating new hires gradually, scheduling hydration breaks, and training supervisors to recognize symptoms early.

Use this toolkit to implement or update your workplace health and safety policy, protect your team, and stay ahead of OSHA's inspections.

Heat Acclimatization Schedule

Workers are most vulnerable to heat stress during their first few weeks on the job or upon returning from an extended absence. Acclimatization allows the body to gradually adapt to working in extreme heat.

Use this schedule to ease employees into hot conditions safely:

New Workers (No recent exposure to extreme heat)

- Day 1: 20% of the normal workload and time spent in the heat.
- Day 2: 40% of the normal workload.
- Day 3: 60% of the normal workload.
- Day 4: 80% of the normal workload.
- Day 5: 100% of the normal workload.
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Experienced Workers (Returning after a week or more away)

- Day 1: 50% of the normal workload.
- Day 2: 60% of the normal workload.
- Day 3: 80% of the normal workload.
- Day 4: 100% of the normal workload.

Note: During heat waves, even experienced workers should be monitored closely and provided with additional rest breaks.

Heat-Illness Training Checklist

Employers are required to provide training to employees regarding workplace safety regulations. Ensure all supervisors and team members complete this checklist before the summer season begins.

- **Recognize the Hazards:** Employees understand the personal and environmental risk factors for heat illness (e.g., high humidity, heavy protective clothing, lack of acclimatization).
- **Identify the Symptoms:** Staff can identify signs of heat exhaustion (heavy sweating, weakness, dizziness, nausea) and heat stroke (red/dry skin, confusion, loss of consciousness).
- **Hydration Requirements:** Workers know they must drink water every 15 minutes, even if they do not feel thirsty.
- **Rest and Shade:** Employees understand their right to request hazard prevention, including mandatory cool-down rests in shaded or air-conditioned areas.
- **Emergency Response:** Supervisors know exactly how to report hazards in the workplace and the immediate steps to take if a worker exhibits signs of heat stroke (call 911, move to shade, cool the worker immediately).
- **Buddy System:** Workers are assigned a partner to monitor each other for signs of heat illness throughout the shift.

Preventive Measures & OSHA Compliance Template

Use this template to document your daily safety compliance and operational metrics. Proper documentation proves your commitment to employee safety and helps ensure you meet OSHA's regulatory requirements.

Date: _____

Job Site / Department: _____

Site Supervisor: _____

Forecasted Peak Temperature: _____

1. Water Supply

- ☐ Potable drinking water is available at no cost to employees.
- ☐ Water stations are placed as close to the work area as possible.
- ☐ Sufficient supplies exist to provide at least one quart of water per employee per hour.

2. Shade and Cooling

- ☐ Adequate shade is open to the air and located close to the work area.
- ☐ Shade is sufficient to accommodate all employees on recovery or rest periods.
- ☐ Indoor workers have access to functional air conditioning or industrial fans.

3. Shift Planning

- ☐ Heavy manual labor is scheduled for the cooler parts of the day (early morning or late evening).
- ☐ Routine rest breaks are scheduled and enforced.
- ☐ The acclimatization schedule is actively being followed for new and returning employees.

4. Communication and Monitoring

- ☐ Supervisors have a reliable method of communication (cell phones, two-way radios) to contact emergency services.
- ☐ Employees have been reminded of the daily heat hazards during the morning safety brief.

Simplify Your Workplace Safety Compliance

Protecting your workers from heat illness is essential, but managing the complexities of HR, payroll, and compliance regulations does not have to be overwhelming.

solveHR provides comprehensive and customizable HR solutions that streamline operations, reduce operational costs, and seamlessly integrate into your existing systems. From electronic onboarding to proactive compliance management, our experts are here to empower your business growth.

Contact solveHR today to audit your workplace health and safety policies and ensure your team stays protected all year long.