

OSHA National Emphasis Program on Indoor and Outdoor Heat Hazards



OSHA is launching a targeted program to protect workers across the nation from the increasing threat of heat-related illness.

What is the National Emphasis Program (NEP) on heat?

- The NEP creates, for the first time, a nationwide enforcement mechanism for OSHA to proactively inspect workplaces for heat-related hazards in general industry, maritime, construction, or agriculture operation alleging hazardous exposures to heat (outdoors and/or indoors). This means that OSHA can now launch heat-related inspections on high-risk worksites before workers suffer preventable injuries, illnesses, or fatalities.
- The NEP encourages employers to protect workers from heat hazards by providing employee access to water, rest, shade, adequate training, and implementing acclimatization procedures for new or returning employees. It contains both enforcement and outreach/compliance assistance components.
- The NEP establishes heat priority days when the heat index is expected to be 80°F or higher. On heat priority days:
 - OSHA will initiate compliance assistance in the targeted high-risk industries.
 - OSHA will also continue to inspect any alleged heat-related fatality/catastrophe, complaint, or referral regardless of whether the worksite falls within a targeted industry of this NEP.
- OSHA will conduct programmed (pre-planned) inspections in targeted high-risk industries on any day that the National Weather Service has announced a heat warning or advisory for the local area.
- OSHA also recognizes that many businesses want to do the right thing by developing heat illness prevention plans to keep their employees safe.
 - On heat priority days, OSHA field staff will engage in proactive outreach and technical/compliance assistance to help keep workers safe on the job.

Impacted Industries

- The NEP targets over 70 high-risk industries based on:
 - Bureau of Labor Statistics data on incidence rates of heat-related illnesses and number of employee days away from work rate.
 - Elevated numbers of fatalities or hospitalizations reported by employers to OSHA; and
 - Highest number of heat-related general duty clause 5(a)(1) violations and Hazard Alert Letters over a 5-year period (1/1/2017 thru 12/31/2021), or highest number of OSHA heat inspections since 2017.

Why is the NEP necessary?

- The danger of extreme heat increases each year due to continuing effects of climate change.
 - 18 of the last 19 summers were the hottest on record.
- Workers suffer over 3,500 injuries and illnesses related to heat each year.
- Low-wage workers and workers of color disproportionately make up the population of employees exposed to high levels of heat, intensifying socioeconomic and racial inequalities.

What are the timeframes?

- The NEP is effective on April 8, 2022, and will remain in effect for three years unless canceled or extended by a superseding directive