

Safety Bulletin

Cal-OSHA Releases New Heat Illness Requirements

On February 27, 2015 Cal-OSHA approved the much anticipated revisions to its Heat Illness Requirements. Despite the objections from a variety of employer groups, including construction and agriculture, the Standards Board adopted the requirements on a vote of 5-1. Based on a summary issued by the **Cal-OSHA Reporter** (2/27/2015 Vol24No.8) key elements include:

- Water must be “fresh, pure, suitably cool” and located as close as practicable to where employees are working, with exceptions when employers can demonstrate infeasibility.
- Shade must be present at **80 degrees, instead of the current 85**, and accommodate **all** employees on recovery or rest periods, and those onsite taking meal periods. There is an exception for infeasibility.
- Employees taking a “preventative cool-down rest” must be monitored for symptoms of heat illness, encouraged to remain in the shade and not ordered back to work until symptoms are gone. Employees with symptoms must be provided appropriate first aid or emergency response.
- High-heat procedures (which will remain triggered at 95 degrees) shall ensure “effective” observation and monitoring, including a mandatory buddy system and regular communication with employees working by themselves. During high heat, agricultural employees must be provided with a minimum 10-minute cool-down period every two hours.
- Emergency response procedures include effective communication, response to signs and symptoms of heat

illness, instructions on what to do when employees exhibits severe heat symptoms, and procedures for contacting emergency responders to help stricken workers.

- Acclimation procedures including close observation of all employees during a heat wave—defined as at least 80 degrees. New employees must be closely observed for their first two weeks on the job.
- New training requirements include employers’ responsibilities, employees’ rights, and appropriate first aid and emergency response.

It is anticipated that the new regulations will take effect as early as May, offering very little time to prepare and train. A joint letter issued on March 4, 2015, from five construction organizations (UCON, SCCA, CEA, NECA and CLC) to Juliann Sims, Chief, Division of the Occupational Safety & Health, have requested “clarification” on the revisions. A response is pending as of the date of this bulletin.

Cal-OSHA Reporter will offer a Webinar and have training in place for owners, managers, and safety personnel shortly. In addition WS&CO. in coordination with Alan Larson, Alan Larson & Associates and Bob Downey, RED Consulting will be developing updated management and training materials.

For a copy of the Cal-OSHA Reporter issue, please email Cam Dickinson: cdickinson@wsandco.com.