

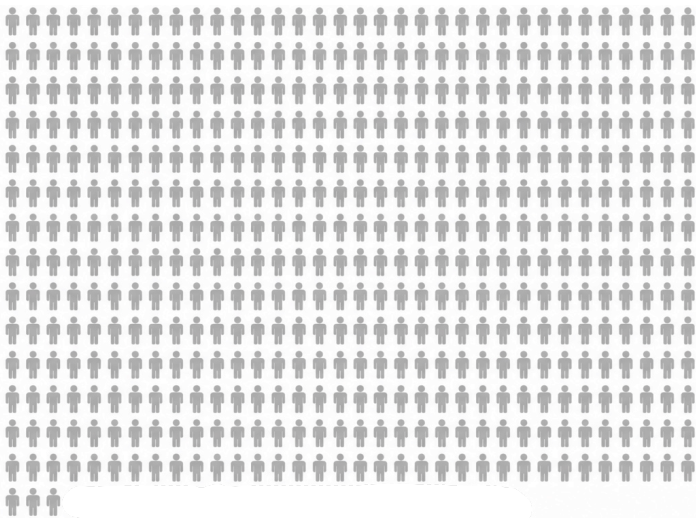
HEAT STRESS IN THE WORKPLACE

OSHA REGULATIONS & WHAT'S COMING

WORKPLACE SAFETY COMPLIANCE GUIDE | APRIL 2026

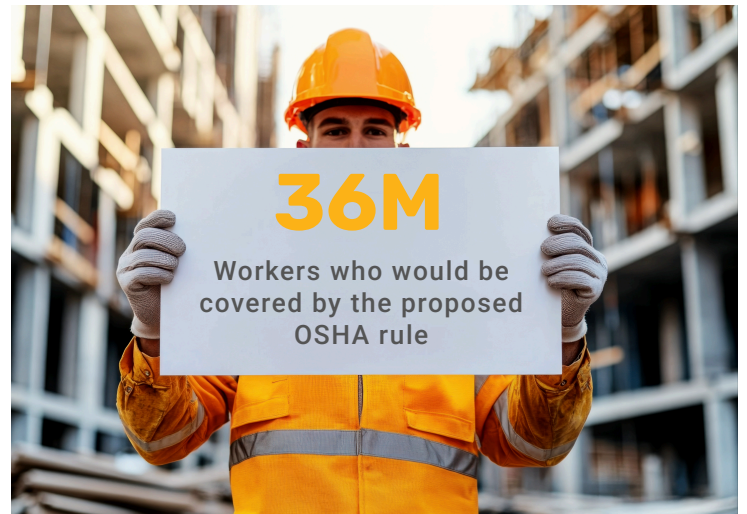
479

Worker fatalities from heat exposure (2011-2022, BLS)



33,890

Heat-related injuries causing lost work days (2011-2020)



Current OSHA Authority – No Specific Heat Standard (Yet)

OSHA does not currently have a specific federal standard for heat exposure.

However, employers are not off the hook.

Employers are still responsible for providing a workplace free from recognized hazards, including heat-related risks.

OSHA actively enforces heat safety through the following mechanisms:

General Duty Clause (Section 5(a)(1))

OSHA's Core Guidance (Water · Rest · Shade)

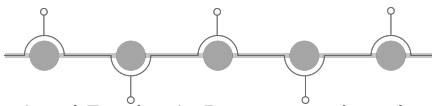
National Emphasis Program (NEP)

PPE Standard (29 CFR 1910.132)

Current OSHA Resources



Rulemaking Timeline



April 2022 - OSHA launches National Emphasis Program on heat hazards; thousands of inspections begin across high-risk industries.

August 30, 2024 - OSHA publishes landmark Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) – Heat Injury and Illness Prevention in Outdoor and Indoor Work Settings – in the Federal Register.

January 14, 2025 - Public comment period closes after receiving over 43,000 comments from stakeholders.

June 16 – July 2, 2025 - Virtual informal public hearing held; post-hearing comments accepted through October 30, 2025.

2026 – Current Status - Final rule under review. OSHA anticipates finalizing in late 2025 or early 2026. NEP extended through April 2026.

Expected: 150-Day Phase-In After Final Rule - Once finalized, employers will have approximately 150 days to comply – potentially as soon as summer 2026.

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UPCOMING FEDERAL HEAT STANDARD

KEY REQUIREMENTS & EMPLOYER OBLIGATIONS

PROPOSED OSHA RULE – WHAT EMPLOYERS MUST PREPARE FOR

Six Core Proposed Requirements



1. Written HIIPP

- Site-specific Heat Injury & Illness Prevention Plan required
- Must identify all heat-exposure work areas
- Must be reviewed and updated as conditions change
- Written plan available to all workers and OSHA inspectors



2. Heat Monitoring

- Develop monitoring plan for each at-risk work area
- Use heat index (temp + humidity) or WBGT measurement
- On-site heat records retained for 6 months
- Reassess whenever processes, equipment, or outdoor temps change substantially



3. Water & Rest

- Cool potable water provided at no cost to employees
- Designated rest/break areas with shade, A/C, or air movement
- Paid rest breaks at High Heat Trigger (15 min / 2 hrs)
- Workers must not be discouraged from taking breaks



4. Acclimatization

- Mandatory acclimatization plan for new employees during Week 1
- Special protocols for workers returning after 14+ day absence
- Gradual increase in workload and heat exposure over first days
- Buddy system recommended during acclimatization period



5. Training

- All workers must receive heat safety training before exposure
- Must cover signs/symptoms of heat illness, risk factors, prevention
- Supervisors get additional training on response & management
- Training at no cost to employees; must be in employee's language



6. Emergency Response

- Designated Heat Safety Coordinator at high-heat trigger
- Clear procedures for responding to heat emergencies
- Two-way communication maintained with workers at all times
- First aid and emergency contact procedures documented in HIIPP

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