



KEEPING WORKERS SAFE IN THE HEAT OF SUMMER



Builders' Exchange
OF SANTA CLARA COUNTY

WATER. REST. SHADE.

By Cari Elofson-Callahan



Every year dozens of workers die and thousands more become ill while working in extreme heat or humid conditions. There are a range of heat illnesses that can affect anyone, regardless of age or physical condition.

OSHA requires employers to provide workplaces free of known safety hazards, including protecting workers from extreme heat. Employers with workers exposed to high temperatures should establish a complete heat illness prevention program.

- Provide workers with water, rest and shade.
- Allow new or returning workers to gradually increase workloads and take more frequent breaks as they acclimatize or build a tolerance for working in the heat.
- Plan for emergencies and train workers on prevention.
- Monitor workers for signs of illness.

[OSHA's Occupational Exposure to Heat page](#) explains what employers can do to keep workers safe and what workers need to know, including factors for heat illness, adapting to working in indoor and outdoor heat, recognizing symptoms, first aid training, resources for specific industries and OSHA standards. Also look for heat illness educational and

training materials available free on the OSHA [Publications page](#).

Take precautions against outdoor heat with the OSHA-NIOSH Heat Safety Tool, with real-time heat index and hourly forecasts, specific to your location, and occupational safety and health recommendations from OSHA and NIOSH. The Heat Safety Tool is available for [iPhone](#) and [Android](#).

The [National Integrated Heat Health Information System \(NIHHIS\)](#) is an integrated system that builds understanding of the problem of extreme heat and improves capacity, communication and societal understanding of the problem in order to reduce morbidity and mortality due to extreme heat. NIHHIS provides many heat related resources, including a Current Temperature Probability Outlook and a Current Heat Index Outlook. NIHHIS is a jointly developed system by the CDC and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. [Learn More](#)

Cari Elofson-Callahan is the Assistant Director of the [OSHA Training Institute Education Center at Chabot-Las Positas Community College District](#). *The recommendations in this article are advisory in nature, informational in content, and are intended to assist employers in providing a safe and healthful workplace.*

