

Work Safe. Be Safe.



Guidelines for Workplace Heat Prevention

Outdoor Operations and Indoor Facilities

Overview of Occupational Heat Hazards

High heat load results from combined environmental factors (sun, wind, humidity), metabolic workload, clothing, and PPE. The degree to which a worker is affected depends on personal risk factors (e.g., age, physical fitness, medications). Examples include:

Outdoor Environmental Hazards Examples

- Solar Radiation: Direct sunlight compounding ambient air temperatures, up to 15 degrees from shade.
- High Humidity: Combines with ambient air temperature to exacerbate "heat risk" because it prevents sweat from evaporating, your body's primary way of cooling itself.
- Reflective and Radiant Surfaces: Asphalt, concrete, heavy equipment, etc.
- Physical Exertion: Heavy labor tasks (trenching, loading) compounded by PPE.

Indoor Environmental Hazards Examples

- Stagnant Air: Poor ventilation, lack of airflow, and high localized humidity.
- Radiant Heat Vectors: Furnaces, boilers, pumps, equipment etc.
- Unconditioned Spaces: Attics, upper floors, mechanical rooms, crawlspaces, etc.

Employer Requirements (OSHA / Massachusetts Department of Labor Standards)

Develop and implement a written **Heat Illness Prevention Plan** and imitate it when local **heat index** reaches or is forecast to reach 80°F.

- Train Employees: Heat Illness, risk factors, self- monitoring, prevention, first aid and emergency response.
- Train Supervisors: Topics above, plus emergency medical care, monitoring weather advisories, planning and executing work-rest and acclimatization schedules, providing water and cooling areas, and monitoring worker physical condition.

Provide Hydration: Ensure free access to cool, potable drinking water. Employers must supply enough water to allow for at least 1 quart (32 oz.) per hour per person.

- Establish Cooling Infrastructure: Provide dedicated spaces (e.g., air- conditioned indoor spaces or municipal vehicles), or shaded outdoor areas (e.g., pop-up awnings). Can also use high- velocity fans indoors and outdoors.

- Acclimatize Employees Working in High Heat Conditions: Nearly 3 out of 4 fatalities from heat illness occur in the first week of work! (OSHA). At heat risk threshold of 80°F, gradually build employee heat tolerance. This is mandatory for new hires, employees returning from an absence of a week or more, and all workers during heatwaves.
- Supervision: Designate a position on-site to monitor weather & employee conditions.
- Work- Rest Schedules: As the heat index rises, adjust schedule to cooler morning hours for intensive manual labor (e.g., digging) and work in direct sun, or transition to indoor work. Increase frequency and duration of rest periods in shaded / cooled environments.

Heat Illness Prevention Plan Implementation Schedule for Municipal Supervisors

Heat Index	Risk Level	Required Actions
80°F.- 89°F.	Caution	Activate heat plan. Provide 1 quart of water/hour. Ensure shade or cooling is available. Start buddy system
90°F.-102°F.	High	Implement mandatory work- rest schedule. Shift heavy physical labor to morning. Enforce hydration breaks.
103°F.	Extreme	Stop non-essential outdoor work. Maximize rest periods. Continuous supervisor monitoring.

[National Weather Service](#)

We encourage you to share the full guidance document below with your supervisors and employees

[FULL GUIDANCE DOCUMENT](#)

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