



THURSDAY, AUGUST 19, 2010

Cal/OSH Board Unanimously Approves New Heat Illness Standards

The proposed changes to General Industry Safety Order section 3395 were unanimously adopted by the Cal/OSH Standards Board today, as reported by the *Cal-OSHA Reporter*. The rulemaking package includes new requirements that will require “shade up” provisions when the temperature reaches 85 degrees, additional protective precautions when the temperature exceeds 95 degrees, and clarification of what constitutes a “shade break.” The regulations also provide exemptions from the shade up requirement for employers when it is not feasible, providing employers can provide an alternative and effective shade option.

Summary of Proposed Amendments:

1. **Shade:** When the temperature of an outdoor workplace exceeds 85 degrees the employer must have and maintain one or more shade areas sufficient to accommodate 25% of the employees on the work shift at any time located “as close as practicable” to where the employees are currently working. The existing section requires employers to provide access to shade for no less than 5 minutes and allows for alternative cooling measures if they are as effective as shade.
2. **Water:** Proposal to amend the existing language in the section to clarify that the drinking water must be provided at no cost to the employee, and shall be fresh, pure and suitably cool.
3. **High-heat procedures:** Proposal to add new requirements for procedures to reduce the risk of heat illness in outdoor workplaces when the temperature equals or exceeds 95 degrees. The new procedures would require employers to ensure the capability of contacting a supervisor when necessary, for observing employees for alertness and signs or symptoms of heat illness, for reminding employees throughout the work shift to drink plenty of water and for close supervision of new employees for the first 14 days of employment, unless they provide specified information that they are acclimatized to work in heat in excess of 95 degrees. The effect of this proposal requires extra precautions, where practicable, under high heat conditions.
4. **Training:** With the goal of making training more comprehensive and effective, the amendments require employees and supervisors to receive training prior to beginning outdoor work, specifically training related to the burden of heat load on the body caused by exertion, clothing, and personal protective equipment. Additional elements of training include an added requirement to ensure emergency procedures are invoked when appropriate, how to monitor weather reports, and how to respond to hot weather advisories.

Salinas Office:
Salinas Office:
295 S. Main Street,
Suite 300
Salinas, CA 93901
Tel: (831) 443-7100
Fax: (831) 443-8585

Sacramento:
4120 Douglas Blvd.,
Suite 306-402
Granite Bay, CA 95746-5936
Tel: (916) 782-8555
Fax: (916) 782-8545

Other Offices:
Fresno, CA
Tel: (559) 449-8585

Palm Desert, CA
Tel: (760) 469-9001