

MODEL SAFE WORK PROCEDURE: Heat Stress Emergency Response Procedure

THE PROBLEM: Work in extreme heat can lead to a variety of heat-related illnesses, including deadly heat stroke. Failure to protect your own workers from these ailments can result not only in fatalities and serious injuries but OSHA violations under the so called General Duty Clause, which requires employers to safeguard employees from “recognized hazards” not specifically addressed in an OSHA standard.

HOW TOOL HELPS SOLVE THE PROBLEM: Developing safe work procedures for work in extreme heat is one of the best ways to prevent heat-related illnesses. Here’s a Model Emergency Response Procedure for ensuring first aid can be effectively provided to workers who suffer heat stress or other illnesses and injuries. The Procedure is based on a sample from Cal-OSHA where unlike under federal OSHA, there is a specific heat stress standard. Although it tracks California requirements, the Procedure is an excellent model for employers in other states where workers work in high temperatures involving the risk of heat-related illness.

ABC COMPANY EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROCEDURE

Authorized Personnel: The following designated person[s] (Program Administrator Safety Coordinator/Supervisor/Foreman/Field Supervisor/Crew Leader) have authority and responsibility for implementing the provisions of this procedure at this worksite.

Name/Title/Phone Number

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

- A. Before assigning a crew to a particular worksite, workers and the foreman will be provided a map of the site, along with clear and precise directions including streets or road names, distinguishing features and distances to major roads to avoid a delay of emergency medical services.
- B. Before assigning a crew to a particular worksite, efforts will be made to ensure that a qualified and appropriately trained and equipped person is available at the site to render first aid if necessary.
- C. Before the start of the shift, a determination will be made of whether a language barrier is present at the site and, if it is, steps will be taken to ensure it doesn't compromise the effectiveness of emergency response, e.g., assigning the responsibility to call emergency medical services to the foreman or an English speaking worker to ensure that emergency medical services can be immediately called in the event of an emergency.
- D. All foremen and supervisors will carry cell phones or other means of communication, to ensure that emergency medical services can be called. Checks will be made to ensure that these electronic devices are functional before each shift.
- E. When a worker shows symptoms of possible heat illness, steps will be taken immediately to keep him/her cool and comfortable until emergency service responders have been called to prevent progression to more serious illness before responders arrive.
- F. At remote locations such as rural farms, lots or undeveloped areas, the supervisor will designate one or more workers to physically go to the nearest road or highway where emergency responders can see them. If daylight is diminished, the designated worker(s) shall be given reflective vest or flashlights to direct emergency personnel to the location of the worksite which may not be visible from the road or highway.

- G. During a heat wave or hot temperatures, workers will be reminded and encouraged to immediately report to their supervisor any signs or symptoms of heat-related illnesses that they are or may be experiencing.
- H. Workers' and supervisors' training will include every detail of these ABC Company written emergency response procedures.
- I. When a worker displays possible signs or symptoms of heat illness, a trained first aid worker or supervisor will check him/her and determine whether resting in the shade and drinking cool water will suffice or if emergency service providers need to be called. A sick worker will not be left alone in the shade!
- J. When a worker displays possible signs or symptoms of heat illness and no trained first aid worker or supervisor is available at the site, emergency service providers will be called.
- K. **Emergency service providers will be called immediately if a worker displays signs or symptoms of heat illness (loss of consciousness, incoherent speech, convulsions, red and hot face), doesn't look OK or doesn't get better after drinking cool water and resting in the shade. While the ambulance is in route, first aid will be initiated (cool the worker: place the worker in the shade, remove excess layers of clothing, place ice pack in the armpits and groin area and fan the victim).** Do not let a sick worker leave the site—he/she may be disoriented and get lost or die before reaching a hospital!
- L. If a worker doesn't look OK and displays signs or symptoms of severe heat illness (loss of consciousness, incoherent speech, convulsions, red and hot face), and the worksite is located more than 20 minutes away from a hospital, call emergency service providers, communicate the signs and symptoms of the victim and request Air Ambulance.