

It's Getting Hot in Here: OSHA Proposes New Heat Hazard Rules

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Did you know that OSHA does not currently have a specific standard covering heat stress hazards? Rather, OSHA uses the General Duty Clause, Section 5(a)(1) of the Occupational Safety and Health Act, to impose requirements related to heat stress. OSHA reports that between 1986 and 2023 it has issued at least 348 hazardous heat-related citations under the General Duty Clause. Of these citations, 85 were issued between 1986-2000.

However, on August 30, 2024, OSHA published a [Notice of Proposed Rulemaking](#) for *Heat Injury and Illness Prevention in Outdoor and Indoor Work Settings*. The proposed standard would apply to all employers conducting outdoor and indoor work in all general industry, construction, maritime, and agriculture sectors where OSHA has jurisdiction. The standard would require employers to create a plan to evaluate and control heat hazards in their workplace to prevent and reduce the number of occupational injuries, illnesses, and fatalities caused by exposure to hazardous heat.

Further, under the proposed standard, the initial heat trigger is 80°F. At or above this temperature, employers would have to implement controls such as:

1. cold drinking water;
2. break area(s) for indoor and outdoor worksites;
3. acclimatization of new and returning employees;
4. rest breaks if needed to prevent overheating; and
5. effective communication with employees throughout the workday.

Under the proposed standard, the high heat trigger is 90°F. At or above this temperature, employers would have to implement additional controls such as:

1. required rest breaks;
2. observation for signs and symptoms;
3. hazard alerts; and
4. warning signs for excessively high heat areas.

The comment period on this proposed standard is open until December 30, 2024.

The proposed standard is available on the [Federal Register website](#).

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