

**Safety Meetings are important!**

They: get your employees actively involved  
encourage safety awareness  
help identify problems before they become accidents  
motivate employees to follow proper safety procedures

**We are happy to provide you with a monthly topic for your agenda.**

**ROUTE TO:**

- General Manager
- Safety Coordinator
- Supervisor Dept. \_\_\_\_\_
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Date of Meeting \_\_\_\_\_

**May 2024****Heat Illness Prevention  
Lessons Learned**

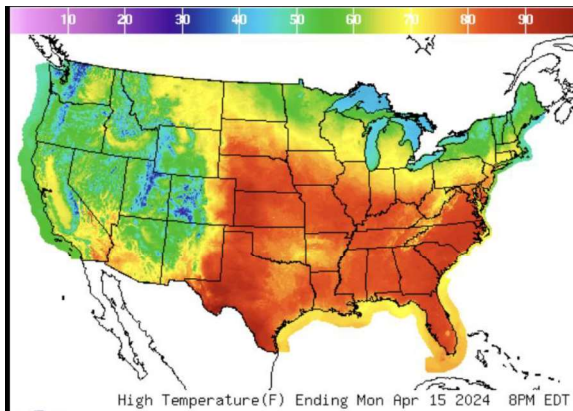
# Heat Illness Prevention

OSHA's general duty clause states that an employer has the obligation to protect employees from potential hazards in the workplace - Heat is one of those hazards. In 2019 OSHA created a National Emphasis Program (NEP) for Heat Illness Prevention. The reason for this program is every year people become ill or die when working in hot or humid environments. The U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reports that between 2015 and 2019, environmental heat cases resulted in an average of 35 fatalities per year and an average of 2,700 cases with days away from work (OSHA, April 2022).

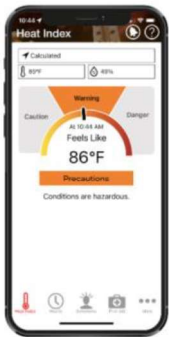
The National emphasis programs allows inspectors to specifically look for job locations where heat related hazards may exist. It also means that any inspection OSHA conducts may include a heat illness prevention inspection. OSHA's intention with this NEP is to encourage employers to prevent illnesses and deaths during high heat conditions, such as working in an area experiencing a heat wave when notification is issued by the National Weather Service.



The National Weather Service (NWS) uses a heat index to classify environmental heat into four categories:



Caution (80°F – 90°F HI)  
Extreme Caution (91°F – 103°F HI)  
Danger (103°F – 124°F HI)  
Extreme Danger (126°F or higher HI),



Weather conditions may be followed through the National Weather Service's [National Forecast Maps](#) or using a [phone app](#) (available for both *iPhone* and *Android*) developed by OSHA, CDC and NIOSH.

OSHA recommends, but does not require, employers to develop a heat illness prevention program if their workers may be exposed to high temperatures. This program includes sections for:

[Planning and supervision](#) -assigning responsibility for daily supervision, new employees, temporary and contract workers.

[Protecting new workers](#) - new employees are especially vulnerable to succumbing to heat illness. Challenges to the new employee range from a new environment to wanting to please their boss and co-workers.



[Heat Hazard recognition](#) - the employer should be able to recognize the challenges for the worksite, weather conditions and physical demands of a job.

[Engineering controls, Work practices and PPE](#) - the employer should have mitigated the heat using engineering controls (like AC, fans and using mechanical equipment rather than physical labor. Work schedules may be modified or more breaks scheduled. And PPE such as cooling neck wraps, cooling vests and hats should be provided.

[Heat stress calculator](#) - This calculator aggregates hazard factors like temperature + workload + acclimatized status (*new worker or job transfer has a higher risk factor*) + Clothing requirements + Body weight to determine whether an employee's heat stress level is above NIOSH/OSHA's recommended limits.

[Provide water, rest and shade](#) - Employers should provide water to keep employees hydrated and electrolyte fluids for employees working 2+ hours, in any hot environment. Employers should require employees to take breaks, depending on the environment.

Employers should provide training on Heat related illnesses and their signs.

Your company may not want or need to create a Heat Illness Prevention Plan but you can and should train your employees on heat related illnesses, signs/symptoms and first aid. There are posters and training information available on OSHA's [heat illness webpage](#).



**Lessons Learned:** *GAWDA members share their experiences in their own words*

### **Dry Ice Block Press Amputation**

An employee was attempting to clean off dry ice build up from the ejection chute of a dry ice block press. Employee reached around the machine guard and the hydraulically powered gate caught his hand, crushing 2 fingers, which later needed to be amputated.

Prior to the incident, the employee was fully trained on the safe operation of the machine.

A block of ice is never worth risking injury.

#### **Corrective Action and Ideas**

- Numerous stickers placed on machine as warnings to not stick hands in/near the machine
- Weekly training/toolbox talks
- Procedure refresher with employees – the do's and don'ts for the job
- Added guards to the one belt feed on the conveyor
- Perform Lockout Tagout when applicable to clear significant buildup, clean the machine or perform any other maintenance task
- Use of pokers to avoid human body parts entering the machine or being used as dislodging or alignment devices, never reaching into or even near the machine while operating or even powered
- Potential use of denatured alcohol spray for the gates to reduce condensation and frost build up

If you have any questions about this article or other OSHA, EPA, DHS, please contact me.

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