



How Can We Protect Ourselves from Heat Stress at Work?

STUDENT HANDBOOK

Part of the Heat Safety Training Toolkit

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Introduction

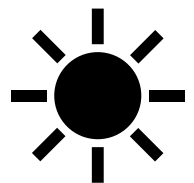
This student handbook has been prepared to help you understand how to protect yourself from heat stress, how to recognize the symptoms of heat stress, and what to do if you or someone else develops symptoms of heat stress or heat illness. It also explains your rights in the workplace.

Heat Stress

Have you heard about heat stress?

What do you know about heat stress?

- ❖ **Heat stress occurs when the body becomes too hot.**
- ❖ **If a person doesn't take time to rest and cool down, it can become more serious and cause heat illness (heat exhaustion; heat stroke).**



Symptoms

How do you know if you have heat stress?

Be aware:

- ❖ Sometimes the symptoms are very similar to those caused by pesticide exposure.
- ❖ You can have a headache or feel sick to your stomach.



Have you heard of other symptoms?

You can have...

- ❖ Rashes
- ❖ Weakness
- ❖ Sweating
- ❖ Extreme thirst
- ❖ Nausea, vomiting
- ❖ Dizziness

Health risks

- ❖ Heat stress can rapidly become something very serious.
- ❖ If you don't treat it in time, it can cause problems – sometimes very serious health problems, including death.



Have you experienced heat stress?

Prevention of heat stress

There are steps you can take to prevent heat stress. Do you have ideas about what they are?

What to do:

- ❖ Take breaks in the shade during the day.
- ❖ Begin working early and take a break during the hottest part of the day.
- ❖ Drink water before, during, and after work. Don't wait until you feel sick to drink.
- ❖ You should drink at least a quarter of a gallon (**4 cups**) of water **every hour**.
- ❖ The water should be close to where you are working.



What kind of clothes should you wear to protect yourself from heat stress?

Best clothes to wear:

- ❖ Light-colored, lightweight clothing is recommended.
- ❖ Cotton shirts with long sleeves, cotton pants, and a hat with a wide rim can protect you best!
- ❖ Be sure to keep wearing boots and gloves to protect yourself from pesticides.
- ❖ If you have to wear thick protective clothing or equipment on top of your regular clothes, make sure to take it off when you are resting to give your body a chance to cool off.



Treatment of heat stress

What should you do if you or someone else is experiencing symptoms of heat stress?

What to do:

- ❖ Move to a shaded area to rest.
- ❖ Take off unnecessary clothing.
- ❖ Drink water.
- ❖ Put cool water on the body – especially on the chest.



If you see the following symptoms:

- ❖ Slurred speech
- ❖ Confusion, inability to think clearly
- ❖ Convulsions/Seizures
- ❖ Collapsing
- ❖ Loss of consciousness/Fainting

SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION IMMEDIATELY! Call **911** for an ambulance, move the person to the shade, remove unnecessary clothing, and cool them down with cold water, cold damp towels, and/or ice packs. Don't leave the person alone. If they are able to drink, give them cold fluids to drink. Don't give anything to drink to someone who is convulsing or unconscious.



Heat stress and the law

How can the law help to protect you from heat stress?

According to the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) Field Sanitation Standard ([29 CFR 1928.110](#)):

- ❖ Your employer must provide sufficient and clean drinking water for each person.
- ❖ Drinking water should be close to where you work and there should be disposable cups.



In California:

According to the state's heat standard ([T7 CCR §3395](#)):

- ❖ Your employer must give you a training about heat stress.*
- ❖ Your employer must provide a place with shade when the temperature is **80 degrees or more**.
- ❖ You have the right to take a break in the shade for at least **5 minutes** if you need to.
- ❖ If the temperature is **95 degrees or more**, you have the right to a **10-minute break** in the shade **every two hours**.

*According to the California's wage rules, your employer must pay you for the mandatory heat stress training they provide you. *California's Order Regulating Wages, Hours, and Working Conditions in Agricultural Occupations* ([T8 CCR 8 §11140](#)) defines "hours worked" as the time during which an employee is subject to the control of an employer. Time spent in mandatory training is considered hours worked.

In Colorado:

According to the state's heat standard (part of the *Agricultural Labor Conditions Rules*, [7 CCR 1103-15](#)):

- ❖ Your employer must give you a training about heat stress.*
- ❖ Your employer must provide a place with shade when the temperature is **80 degrees or more**.
- ❖ You have the right to take a break in the shade for at least **10 minutes** if you need to.
- ❖ When the temperature is **95 degrees or more**, your boss must give you a rest break of at least 10 minutes every two hours.

* According to Colorado's wage rules, your employer must pay you for the mandatory heat stress training they provide you. Colorado's *Overtime and Minimum Pay Standards Order* ([7 CCR 1103-1-1.9](#)) defines "time worked" as time during which an employee is performing labor or services for the benefit of an employer. Time during which employees are required to be "receiving or sharing work-related information" is "considered time worked that must be compensated".

In Oregon:

According to the state's heat standard ([OAR 437-002-0156](#)):

- ❖ Your employer must give you a training about heat stress.*
- ❖ Your employer must provide a place with shade when the heat index is **80 degrees or more**.
- ❖ You have the right to take a break in the shade for at least **10 minutes every two hours** when the heat index is **90 or more**.
- ❖ You have a right to a **15-minute break every hour** when the heat index is **100 or more**.

*According to Oregon's wage rules, your employer must pay you for the mandatory heat stress training they provide you. Under Oregon's *Rules Regulating Minimum Wage, Overtime and Working Conditions* ([OAR 839-020-0044](#)) trainings at which attendance is mandatory are considered work time. According to the law regarding minimum wages and employment conditions ([ORS 653.010\(11\)](#)) such time must be compensated.

In Washington:

According to the state's heat standard ([WAC 296-307-097](#)):

- ❖ Your employer must give you a training about heat stress.
- ❖ Your employer must provide a place with shade when the temperature is **89 degrees or more**.
- ❖ You have the right to take a break in the shade for at least **10 minutes every two hours** when the temperature is **over 89 degrees**.

*In Washington, your employer must pay you for the mandatory heat stress training they provide you. According to [Administrative Policy ES.C.2](#) "employers must pay employees for all 'hours worked.' 'Hours worked' ...includes travel time, training and meeting time".

Small group activity

The trainer will divide the participants into small groups and ask them to discuss a brief scenario and answer questions. They will then ask a volunteer to share their group's answers with the larger group.

Scenario 1. Emilio has been working in the fields with the rest of the crew for a couple of hours. It's a hot day, and he is wearing protective equipment on top of his regular clothes. He is feeling very thirsty and dizzy. Suddenly, he collapses and falls unconscious. You are his coworkers. **What should you do to help?**

Scenario 2. It is Sofia's first day on the job. She has never worked in agriculture before. It's a hot day. **What would you recommend to her to prevent heat stress? Is there anything the rest of the crew can do to help keep Sofia and each other safe?**

Scenario 3. Antonio has been working in the field for hours when he begins feeling dizzy. He is afraid he is going to faint. **What should he do to recover? How can his coworkers help?**

Review questions

- ❖ What is heat stress?
- ❖ How can you protect yourself from heat stress?
- ❖ What should you do if you feel symptoms of heat stress?

Change

- ❖ Mention a change that you will make to protect yourself from heat stress now that you have had this training.

Speak Up About Safety Violations–Without Fear

If you notice a hazard on the farm, bring the conditions to your supervisor's or employer's attention.

If your employer is not protecting you from workplace hazards as required, you have the **right to report them**.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is a federal enforcement agency that helps prevent and protect workers from being killed or seriously injured while at work.

CONTACT OSHA

There are 5 ways:

1. **Telephone**: Call 1 (800) 321 – 6742
2. **Online**: Submit your online complaint to OSHA at <https://www.osha.gov/ords/osh7/eComplaintForm.html>
3. **Fax or email**: Fax or email the online complaint form to your local OSHA office. Include your contact information.
4. **Mail**: Send a letter describing your complaint to your local OSHA office.
5. **In person**: Visit your local OSHA office.

You **never** have to reveal your immigration status to OSHA.

OSHA Whistleblower Protections

The whistleblower laws that OSHA enforces prohibit employers from retaliating against employees for engaging in activities protected under those laws.

If you report your employer, they **cannot**:

- Fire you or lay you off
- Demote you
- Deny you overtime or a promotion
- Discipline you
- Deny you benefits
- Fail to hire/rehire you
- Intimidate or harass you
- Threaten you
- Reassign you to a less desirable position or do something that will result in you being denied a promotion
- Reduce or change your pay or hours
- Isolate, ostracize, or mock you, or falsely accuse you of poor performance
- Make your working conditions so intolerable that you quit
- Report you or threaten to report you to the police or immigration authorities

How to submit a whistleblower complaint to OSHA

There are 5 ways:

1. **Telephone**: Call 1 (800) 321 – 6742
2. **Online**: Submit your online complaint to OSHA at <https://www.osha.gov/whistleblower/WBComplaint>
3. **Fax or email**: Fax or email the completed online complaint form to your local OSHA office. Include your contact information.
4. **Mail**: Send a letter describing your complaint to your local OSHA office.
5. **In person**: Visit your local OSHA office.

If your employer violates your whistleblower rights, you can complain to OSHA **within 30 days** of the adverse action.