

CONN-OSHA: Workers Can Take Precautions To Avoid Illness During High Heat and Humidity

WETHERSFIELD, July 19, 2019 – In response to the excessive heat Connecticut has been experiencing, along with high humidity, the Connecticut Department of Labor’s Occupational Safety and Health Division (CONN-OSHA) urges supervisors and workers to use the following guidelines to prevent heat-related illnesses in the workplace: Water, Rest, and Shade.

- **Water:** Drink water often, at least one quart per hour.
- **Rest:** Allow new or returning workers to gradually increase workloads and take more frequent breaks as they acclimatize, or build a tolerance for working in the heat.
- **Shade:** Allow time for workers to get out of direct sunlight and rest in the shade for at least five minutes.

“When working during high air temperatures, it is important to limit radiant heat sources such as strong sunlight or hot exhaust, high humidity, avoid direct physical contact with hot objects, and limit strenuous physical activities,” noted CONN-OSHA Director Ken Tucker. “There is a high potential that heat-related illness will occur under these conditions, which means employers and their employees need to take extra precautions to stay safe.”

Tucker noted that the OSHA/NIOSH Heat App Safety Tool is a useful resource for employers and employees planning outdoor work activities during times of high temperatures. Available at <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/heatstress/heatapp.html>, the online tool features real-time heat index and occupational safety and health recommendations from OSHA and the National Institute of Occupational and Safety and Health. The Heat Safety Tool also features:

- A visual indicator of the current heat index and associated risk levels specific to your current geographical location.
- Precautionary recommendations specific to heat index-associated risk levels.

-more-

Media Contact: CT Department of Labor Communications Office
200 Folly Brook Boulevard, Wethersfield, CT 06109-1114
Phone: (860) 263-6535 – Fax: (860) 263-6536 – www.ct.gov/dol
An Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer



- An interactive, hourly forecast of heat index values, risk level, and recommendations for planning outdoor work activities in advance.
- Editable location, temperature, and humidity controls for calculation of variable conditions.
- Signs and symptoms and first aid information for heat-related illnesses.

Outdoor occupations most susceptible to high heat include farming, construction, landscaping, emergency response operations and hazardous waste site activities. Indoor work operations especially prone to the risk of heat-related illness include bakeries, commercial kitchens, laundries, chemical plants, material handling and distribution warehouses, and electrical utilities – particularly boiler rooms.

“Using the Water/Rest/Shade guidelines will reduce heat exposure and the risk of heat-related illness,” Tucker added. “Employers should review their engineering controls, such as air conditioning and ventilation, as well as high heat protocols that employ work/rest cycles, drinking water often, and ensuring employees build up levels of tolerance when working in the heat.”

Employers are also advised to have an effective heat illness prevention plan in place that includes emergency response procedures, providing plenty of drinking water, and training. Training should include heat illness prevention, recognition of signs and symptoms of heat-related illnesses, and how to get immediate medical help if symptoms persist.

###