



Your Healthy Workplace

June 2024

HEAT STRESS A HOT TOPIC

Record-breaking heat is already in the news. As the weather gets hotter, temperatures loom over employees, especially those who work in outdoor environments and indoor facilities without air conditioning or poor ventilation.

In 2023, the Earth's average temperature became the hottest on record. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates heat caused 700 deaths, 6,500 emergency room visits and 9,250 hospitalizations.

The CDC recommends training employees about heat stress: its causes and how to stay safe while working in heat. Employees should also learn the signs, symptoms and treatment of heat stress and what to do in an emergency.

Employers can take simple steps to adopt best practices to stay cool amidst never-ending heat waves.

- ▶ Gradually introduce workers to working in heat, especially for newcomers or those returning after a week-long absence. For example, during the first week back on the job, employers should gradually increase workloads and allow more frequent breaks.

- ▶ Provide an ample supply of safe drinking water near the work area and encourage regular consumption and drinking small quantities frequently.

- ▶ Be strategic with scheduling work hours to help reduce employee exposure to high heat. Schedule work shifts that expose workers to heat for shorter, more frequent periods.

- ▶ Minimize physically demanding tasks during hot weather or schedule them for cooler times of the day.

- ▶ Teach employees about the correct personal protective equipment (PPE) to wear while working in hot weather. They should also be aware of how some PPE can contribute to heat stress, such as some respirators and impermeable clothing.

- ▶ Finally, explore the use of thermally conditioned clothing options, such as garments with pockets for dry ice or with self-contained air conditioners or compressed air sources that supply cool air through vortex tubes.

Source: OH&S

We can help you ...
... establish a safety program for working in heat and educating employees about heat stress symptoms. Contact OCCMed Director Jennifer Carmack at 731-784-8400 or jennifer@occmedjackson.com.

Here comes the sun

Sun glare can make it more difficult to clearly see the road. That's annoying to drivers, but for employers, sun glare creates a higher liability risk by increasing the possibility, and severity, of accidents.

The National Library of Medicine estimates more than 9,000 vehicle accidents are related to sun glare each year in the United States. And, in many states, glare is not acceptable as a defense in an accident.

Reducing sun glare accidents...

A practical step is to just make employees aware of the problems of glare, to drive slower and always yield to pedestrians.

- ▶ If possible, adjust delivery times and routes to minimize the possibility of glare.

- ▶ Keep windshields clean, both inside and out.

- ▶ Make sure windshield wipers are working properly and undergo regular maintenance.

- ▶ Keep washer fluid full for a quick-cleaning option while on the road.

- ▶ Tinting windshields can be effective. Check iwfa.com (the International Window Film Association) to see how Tennessee regulates windshield tints.

- ▶ Adding a second, independent autovisor can help to block the sun from two directions at once and eliminate the distraction of flipping the main visor back-and-forth.

- ▶ Encourage drivers to wear polarized sunglasses.

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One size doesn't fit all

Typically, "one size fits all" is marketed as a convenient, cost-effective option. For personal protective equipment (PPE), however, "one size fits all" is not just ineffective; it's dangerous.

Ill-fitting PPE poses a significant risk to worker safety. Ill-fitting gloves, for example, could slip off at the worst time or compromise a worker's grip, causing him or her to drop a heavy load.

And, if the PPE gets too uncomfortable, workers may choose not to wear it.

That's why any company-issued PPE



should be appropriate for the job and available in a range of sizes so that every worker can find one that fits properly.

If there are no sizes available, then the PPE should have clasps, ties or Velcro straps to allow the wearer to adjust the fit based on their comfort level.

If you have questions, Physicians Quality Care OCCMed can help you identify specific hazards in each department and then recommend the most suitable, task-specific PPE. *Source: OHS*



Hearing tests at your worksite

Our expanded and renovated audio unit means we can get more hearing tests done at a time, and have less interruption on your work production.

With no extra on-site setup fee, we can do up to 30 hearing tests every hour to take care of your OSHA-required hearing-conservation training.

Schedule the audio unit by contacting OCCMed Director Jennifer Carmack at 731-984-8400 or jennifer@occmedjackson.com.



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Time to schedule flu shots

Physicians Quality Care OCCMed is starting to schedule employee flu shots at work sites in September and October.

The CDC recommends the flu shot for everyone six months and older and that people get their flu immunizations in September or October—before flu season typically starts.

As in previous years, the 2024-25 flu vaccine is designed to address expected strains in the flu.

We'll schedule your flu shots at your convenience. Contact OCCMed Director Jennifer Carmack at jennifer@occmedjackson.com or 731-984-8400.



We speak OSHA!

To help you comply with OSHA, we offer ...

- ▶ On-site CAOHC-certified audiometry in our mobile unit
- ▶ DOT, non-DOT & hair follicle drug screening
- ▶ Breath- & blood-alcohol testing
- ▶ Health fairs
- ▶ Strength & agility testing
- ▶ NIOSH-approved pulmonary function testing
- ▶ DOT, wellness & pre-employment physicals
- ▶ Respirator-fit testing & respirator medical evaluations
- ▶ Heavy-metal testing
- ▶ Industrial hygiene: noise sampling, air sampling, dust sampling, etc.
- ▶ Nerve conduction studies
- ▶ X-rays and EKGs