



Workplace Safety

Heat Increases Risk of Injuries Even for Inside Workers

AS MANY parts of the country are wrestling with record-high temperatures this summer, a new study has found that the hotter the weather gets, the higher the risk of workplace accidents and injuries for all workers.

The study by researchers at University of California, Los Angeles, looked at claims data from between 2001 and 2018.

on days with highs above 95 degrees, manufacturing workers had a 7% higher risk of injury than on days when the temperatures were in the low 60s.

Many manufacturing facilities are not air conditioned. The same is often true for warehouses and other production line-type operations, bakeries and laundries.

When temperatures rise, it increases your risk of making mistakes or errors in judgment. Heat stress can cause fine motor performance to deteriorate.

What to do

Get management commitment and buy-in for providing effective controls.

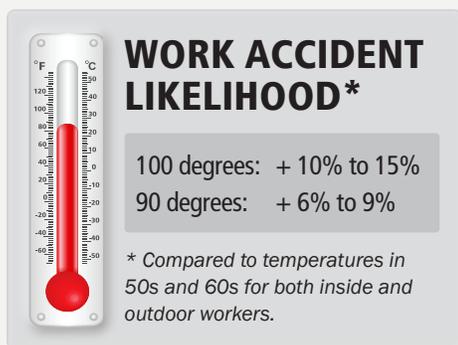
If you have new workers who have not spent time in hot environments or being physically active in the heat, they need time to build tolerance and acclimatize to the heat. OSHA recommends that staff working in hot conditions should:

- Consume adequate fluids (water and sport drinks),
- Work shorter shifts,
- Take frequent breaks, and
- Learn how to identify heat illness symptoms.

For indoor spaces, air conditioning with cooled air and increased air flow, leading to increased evaporative cooling, can make the workplace safer.

Other ways to reduce the risk of accidents during hot weather include:

- Telling workers to slow down physical activity, like reducing manual handling speeds.
- Scheduling work for the morning.
- Scheduling shorter shifts.
- Requiring staff to take frequent breaks in the shade or away from heat sources.
- Encouraging workers to drink hydrating fluids regularly.
- Training workers about heat-related symptoms and first aid. ❖



The report found that high temperatures not only put outdoor workers at higher risk of accidents and injuries, but also indoor workers.

For example, the UCLA study found that