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Heat Illness Prevention

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National Heat Contest



BEAT THE HEAT NATIONAL CONTEST



From April 19 through June 9, 2023, OSHA sponsored a Beat the Heat Contest to raise awareness of the dangers and hazards of heat exposure in both indoor and outdoor workplaces. Raising awareness of heat hazards is an important step in educating workers and employers on how to recognize when heat is affecting workers' health and safety, and how to protect workers from the dangers of exposure to hazardous heat.

The contest's focus on educating stakeholders on the dangers of hazardous heat is important because heat is the leading weather-related killer and is becoming more dangerous as 18 of the last 19 years were the hottest on record. Excessive heat can cause heat illnesses and even death if not treated properly. It also exacerbates existing health problems like asthma, kidney failure, and heart disease. Workers in agriculture and construction are at highest risk for getting heat illness, but the problem affects all workers exposed to heat, including indoor workers without climate-controlled environments. People of color and people with lower incomes often work in industries which increase the likelihood of being exposed to heat as a hazard. Essential jobs where employees are exposed to high levels of heat are disproportionately held by people of color.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, heat stress killed 815 U.S. workers and seriously injured more than 70,000 workers from 1992 through 2017. However, this is likely a vast underestimate given that injuries and illnesses are underreported in the U.S., especially in the sectors employing vulnerable and often undocumented workers. Furthermore, heat is not always recognized as a cause of heat-induced injuries or deaths and can easily be misclassified because many of the symptoms overlap with other more common diagnoses.

About the Contest



Contest Winners



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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Occupational Safety and Health Administration

200 Constitution Ave NW

Washington, DC 20210

☐ [1-800-321-OSHA](tel:1-800-321-OSHA)

[1-800-321-6742](tel:1-800-321-6742)

www.osha.gov

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