

HR BRIEF

OSHA Proposes Heat Injury and Illness Prevention Standard



OSHA recently [published](#) a notice of proposed rulemaking in the Federal Register to protect workers from heat injury and illness. If finalized, the new standard would apply to all employers conducting indoor and outdoor work in all general industry, construction, maritime and agricultural sectors where OSHA has jurisdiction, subject to limited exceptions.

The proposed rule would be the first federal regulation specifically focused on protecting workers from extreme heat.

Employer Obligations

The proposed rule includes a number of safeguards that employers would be required to implement. For example, the proposed standard includes requirements for:

- Identifying heat hazards
- Developing heat illness and emergency response plans
- Providing training to employees and supervisors
- Implementing work practice standards, including rest breaks, access to shade and water, and heat acclimatization for new employees

Next Steps for Employers

Comments on the proposed rule are due by Dec. 30, 2024. If finalized, employers would be required to comply with its requirements within 150 days of publication. Therefore, even if the rule is finalized, employers would not be subject to its requirements until 2025. Employers may take steps now to prepare to comply with the standard. Such measures may include identifying and addressing heat hazards, preparing and updating policies, and preparing training protocols for employees and supervisors. Employers should monitor updates and potential legal challenges.

Employers may also refer to the following resources for additional information and to learn how to provide comments:

- [Background, Health Effects, Risk Assessment, Explanation of Proposed Requirements](#)
- [Rulemaking Process—How to Comment](#)

Motivating Employees to Spend More Time With Open Enrollment

A Voya Financial survey revealed that the average American spends far more time on social media each day than reviewing their benefits information for just one day during open enrollment. In fact, nearly 7 in 10 (69%) employees spend 30 minutes or fewer reviewing their options. The vast majority of employees simply choose the same options as the previous year during open enrollment.

Encouraging Active Employee Participation

As health costs continue to rise, spending time reviewing offerings and needs and making thoughtful benefits decisions is more important than ever. Employees should ensure that their chosen benefits adequately cover their and their family's needs. Rushing through the process might mean missing out on essential coverage options.

To help encourage employees to actively participate in the open enrollment process, employers may consider the following strategies:

- Educate and inform employees about the importance of benefits selection.
- Leverage technology to make the experience engaging and informative.
- Encourage younger employees to take their time and understand their choices.
- Provide support and assistance for employees who have questions or need more assistance.
- Communicate year-round to avoid information overload during open enrollment.
- Solicit feedback from employees about the enrollment process.

Conclusion

By educating, supporting and incentivizing employees, organizations can help them maximize their benefits and enhance their overall job satisfaction. In turn, this can lead to a more motivated, healthy and productive workforce.

Contact us today for more open enrollment guidance or information.