

Memo

Date: July 1, 2010

To: CCMCA Members

From: Julie Trost, Executive Director

RE: SUMMER SAFETY BULLETIN! - Heat Illness

Summer is upon us, so it is time for a reminder about the importance of heat safety for employees working outdoors. When employees work in hot conditions, employers must take special precautions in order to prevent heat illness. While the heat illness prevention regulation requires the basics -- **water, shade, training**, and **written procedures** (as outlined on the enclosed CCMCA *Heat Illness Law Requirements: The Employer's Responsibility*) -- Cal/OSHA offers several best practices to make sure employees are protected including:

- Keep shade up and available at all times when temperatures reach 85 degrees and above;
- Have enough shade to cover 25% of your workforce on a shift;
- Encourage employees to drink water throughout their shift;
- Assign job site “buddies” to monitor each other for signs of heat stress; and
- Make sure to acclimatize employees to warm working conditions.

Heat illness can progress to heat stroke and be fatal, especially when emergency treatment is delayed. Heat illness results from a combination of factors including environmental temperature and humidity, direct radiant heat from the sun or other sources, air speed, and workload. An effective approach to heat illness is vital to protecting the health and safety of California workers.

The enclosed brochure from State Fund addresses the risk factors as well as employer and employee responsibilities to reduce the risk of heat illness and keep our people working safe.

Heat Safety Training Kits that include training guides, PowerPoint presentations, posters, FAQ's, supervisor's daily checklists, sample written plans and other tools are available at the Cal/OSHA website at www.dir.ca.gov/heatillness.

BE AWARE! Cal/OSHA is considering a modified heat illness proposal that will “clarify” sections of the existing regulation, implement “high heat” procedures when temperatures reach 95 degrees for five industries (agriculture, **construction**, landscaping, oil and gas extraction, and **transportation or delivery of agricultural products, construction materials**, or other heavy materials), and enact other employer requirements especially with respect to the provision of

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shade. Moreover, a bill has been introduced (SB 477–Sen. Dean Florez, D-Shafter) that is intended to strengthen the existing regulation as well as implement certain other requirements such as paid mandatory rest periods. Opponents of the bill argue that it pre-empts Cal/OSHA’s current actions. Proponents say Cal/OSHA is not doing enough quickly enough. So, be aware. Change on the heat illness front is coming. It is likely that any changes will not be enacted in time for this year’s hot season, but they are coming soon. We will keep you posted on developments on this important issue.

So, get those EZ-Up’s out, and let’s be ready for the heat!