

OSHA and National Weather Service Team Up to Protect Workers from Heat Illnesses



At a recent training in West Springfield, Mass., an OSHA area compliance specialist educated a class of 37 immigrant workers from Somalia, Bhutan, Iraq, Burma and Nepal about the hazards of working in heat along with other workplace safety issues.

OSHA and the NOAA National Weather Service are teaming up again to prevent heat-related deaths and illnesses. Record-breaking heat the past two years has exacerbated heat-related injuries and fatalities in outdoor workers. With summer heat continuing, Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health Dr. David Michaels and NOAA's National Weather Service Director Dr. Louis Uccellini are reminding employers that heat-related illnesses can be prevented.

"Each year, thousands of workers across the country suffer from serious heat-related illnesses," said Michaels. "This can easily be prevented with water, rest, and shade. If outdoor workers take these precautions, it

can mean the difference between life and death."

In 2011, 4,420 workers experienced heat illnesses and 61 workers died according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics data. To help prevent heat related deaths and illness among workers, NOAA will continue to include the following language in its excessive heat warnings that are sent across the country:

Take extra precautions if you work or spend time outside.
When possible, reschedule strenuous activities to early morning or evening.
Know the signs and symptoms of heat exhaustion and heat stroke.
Wear light-weight and loose fitting clothing when possible and drink plenty of water.
To reduce risk during outdoor work, OSHA recommends scheduling frequent rest breaks in shaded or air-conditioned environments. Anyone overcome by heat should be moved to a cool and shaded location. Heat stroke is an emergency – Call 911.

For more information and to download OSHA's [Heat Safety Tool smartphone app](#), visit [OSHA's Heat Illness Prevention page](#). To order quantities of OSHA's [heat illness educational materials](#) in English or Spanish, call OSHA's Office of Communications at (202) 693-1999.