



Rivergrove Water District Heat Illness Prevention Plan

Background

Oregon OSHA has adopted a rule to address employee exposure to high ambient temperatures. The rule's key requirements apply to any workplace where extreme heat can expose workers to heat-related illness – medical conditions resulting from the body's inability to cope with a particular heat load. Both outdoor and indoor heat exposure can be dangerous. The purpose of this plan is to ensure the general safety of District personnel by preventing and minimizing the risk of heat illness. The full text of the rule is available at: <https://osha.oregon.gov/OSHArules/adopted/2022/ao3-2022-text-ah-heat.pdf#page=8>

Scope

This plan applies to all employees and volunteers for the Rivergrove Water District.

Most District employees work indoors in a climate-controlled environment or in an enclosed vehicle with air-conditioning, so the application of these rules should be rare. Staff are encouraged to adjust their schedules and reschedule outdoor work to avoid exposure to extreme heat. During warm months (May through September, possibly longer) the General Manager monitors air quality, smoke, wildfire, and heat advisories and texts safety messages to staff so they can exercise caution and make good decisions for their own safety. It will be rare that the heat illness prevention breaks come into effect; staff should be mindful of these rules in those cases and ensure they are followed.

Plan Elements

TRAINING

- Complete the Heat Illness Prevention online course on the Oregon OSHA website annually.

EMPLOYEE AWARENESS

- **Know how heat can make you sick** and how to recognize the common signs and symptoms of heat-related illness in yourself and coworkers. The four most common conditions are heat rash, heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke.
- Know the **environmental factors** that increase risk for heat-related illness, such as higher temperatures, humidity, sunlight (working in direct sunlight feels about 15 degrees hotter), and additional heat sources such as powered equipment and asphalt, lack of wind, physical activity, and personal protective equipment (PPE) or layers of clothing.
- Know the **personal factors** that may increase susceptibility to heat-related illness, including age, not being acclimatized, medical conditions (i.e., hormonal and heat issues, diabetes, dehydration), and use of substances that can affect the body's response to heat (i.e., drugs, alcohol, caffeine, nicotine, and medications)
- Know the **importance of removing heat-retaining PPE** such as rain gear during all breaks to allow your body to cool down.

- Know how to **stay well hydrated** by drinking small quantities of water (32 ounces of water is recommended) or other acceptable beverages frequently throughout the day.
- Know the importance of **acclimatization** (to get used to the conditions). It takes approximately two weeks to be fully acclimated.
- Know how to immediately **report signs or symptoms of heat-related illness** you experience or observe in coworkers; how to immediately respond to prevent the situation from becoming a medical emergency; and how to identify and respond to a heat-related medical emergency (i.e., potential heat stroke)

EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

- Monitor the heat index using the NIOSH Heat Safety Tool. Implement Increased Heat Procedures or High Heat Procedures. You are encouraged to download the heat index app so you may check on the current heat index when you are working. [OSHA-NIOSH Heat Safety Tool App/NIOSH/CDC](#)
- Know and understand the requirements of the heat illness prevention program.
- Understand this rule is mandatory and staff cannot waive their rights to any portion.
- Actively participate in the monitoring buddy system. Monitor your buddy and yourself for signs of heat related illness.
- Immediately report to the General Manager if you or a coworker are experiencing signs of symptoms of heat related illness.
- Discuss with your supervisor adjusting your acclimatization schedule if you have factors that may affect your ability to acclimate to the heat.
- Call 911 if someone is experiencing severe signs of heat related illness.

GENERAL MANAGER RESPONSIBILITIES (in addition to what is detailed above)

- The **procedures to follow** to implement the heat-related illness prevention plan, including the acclimatization schedule, how to keep track of environmental conditions throughout the day, when to increase the number of breaks or stop work early, checking that workers are accessing shade and water (especially for mobile operations), encouraging them to stay hydrated, and communicating with lone workers to ensure they are safe.
- What to do **if an employee shows signs and symptoms of possible heat-related illness**, including appropriate emergency response procedures such as how to transport any affected employees to a medical service provider.
- Monitor the heat index using the NIOSH Heat Safety Tool. Implement Increased Heat Procedures or High Heat Procedures with your staff as needed.
- Adjust an employee's acclimatization schedule if they indicate they have factors that may affect their ability to acclimate to the heat.
- Ensure affected staff are trained.
- Ensure employees are given ample opportunities and encouragement to drink water.
- Enforce all portions of this rule that apply to District employees and areas of oversight.

High Heat Exposure and Practices

Work activities performed outdoors could potentially expose employees to heat stress or hazards. The District protects employees from the hazards of working or performing heavy physical activity in warm, hot environmental conditions by providing access to adequate water and breaks, as needed. Employees

who may have underlying medical conditions, lack of physical fitness, have had previous episodes of heat-related illness, and use of certain medication may be particularly susceptible to these hazards.

Heat Illness Prevention Break Schedule

Based on OSHA requirements, there are two triggers for employees required to work outside to prevent heat-related illness during hot weather.

- **“Heat Index” above 80 degrees**, the District must provide:
 - Access to sufficient shade or an employee may sit in a vehicle with air conditioning, and;
 - An adequate amount of water --- up to 32-oz per hour per employee is recommended. A variety of water containers for individuals and vehicles are provided to ensure adequate quantities are available.

- **“Heat Index” above 90 degrees**: All the requirements of a Heat Index of 80 degrees plus employer must provide or ensure:
 - Effective communications between employee and supervisors so employees can report concerns. Ensure cell phones are available.
 - Procedures for employee observation for alertness and signs and symptoms of heat illness and monitored to determine if medical attention is necessary.
 - Provide a minimum of a cool-down rest period in the shade of 10 minutes for every two hours of work. These cool-down periods may be provided concurrently with any other meal or rest period required by policy, rule, or law.
 - Develop and implement an emergency medical plan and acclimation practices to gradually adapt employees to working in the heat.
 - The District may shift work activities indoors or modify work, and/or schedules to reduce exposure to excessive heat, when possible.

- **“Heat Index” above 100 degrees**: District employees shall cease all outdoor work activities.

Monitoring Guidelines

Every employee has the responsibility to monitor for signs and symptoms of heat illness:

Signs of Heat Illness

- ⇒ Headache or nausea
- ⇒ Weakness or dizziness
- ⇒ Heavy sweating or hot, dry skin
- ⇒ Elevated body temperature
- ⇒ Thirst
- ⇒ Decreased urine output

Take these actions!

- ⇒ Give water to drink
- ⇒ Remove unnecessary clothing
- ⇒ Move to a cooler shaded area
- ⇒ Cool with water, ice, or a fan
- ⇒ Do not leave alone
- ⇒ Seek medical care if needed; call 911

Emergency Medical Plan

Regardless of an employee’s work location and who is present, if you experience symptoms of heat illness:

- Remove yourself from the hot environment and cool down.
- Report to the General Manager by any means possible, as soon as possible.

- Call emergency medical services (911) immediately if the symptoms are indicators of severe heat illness such as, but not limited to, decreased level of consciousness, staggering, vomiting, disorientation, irrational behavior, or convulsions.

Signs of a **Medical Emergency** requiring **prompt** action:

- Abnormal thinking or behavior
- Slurred speech
- Seizures
- Loss of consciousness

1. Call 911 immediately
2. Cool the employee right away with water or ice
3. Stay with the employee until help arrives

Acclimatization

The nature of our work does not have staff working in the heat with any regularity and rarely for more than 30 minutes at a time. Staff are rarely conducting a workload that would be considered moderate or heavy. For these reasons, most work can be rescheduled for cooler weather and acclimatization is not necessary.

Staff do, however, occasionally have nonroutine tasks that may require a light workload in the heat for an extended period. If these nonroutine tasks take place when the heat index is forecasted to be at or over 80 degrees, staff must work with the General Manager to ensure adequate protections are in place.

Drinking Water/Hydration

The District will provide cool (77 degrees or colder) or cold water so that employees can drink at least 32 ounces of water an hour when the heat index is above 80°F. The District purchases bottled water for employees so they always have access to water when working where the heat index exceeds 80°F. In addition, the District shop contains a mini-refrigerator to keep water cool and each truck is equipped with ice chest coolers for employees to use in hot environments.

Closure

District employees shall follow this plan and all additional heat illness prevention material provided by the Rivergrove Water District. Prevention of heat illness is everyone's responsibility. Remember... heat stress can be deadly; use common sense in determining fitness for work in hot environments.


Janine Casey
General Manager

Employee Acknowledgement

I acknowledge I have reviewed and understand the requirements of OSHA's heat rule and have completed all required training. I acknowledge I have had the opportunity to ask questions and a copy of the plan is available to me at any time to review on the network's shared drive.

Employee Name (Printed & Signature)