



Indoor Heat Illness Prevention Policy and Guidance

Revised: September 11th, 2024

PURPOSE STATEMENT

The City & County of San Francisco (City) has an obligation to provide a safe and healthy workplace for its employees. This Indoor Heat Illness Prevention Policy and Guidance provides guidance to departments when indoor temperatures in their respective operations reach levels that may be unhealthy for employees.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

Cal/OSHA requires employers to maintain an Injury and Illness Prevention Program under the California Code of Regulations, 8 CCR, Section 3203. Regulations specific to the prevention of indoor heat illness were formally adopted by the state and became effective July 23, 2024. The new standard, General Industry Safety Order 3396, provides a set of procedures that have gone through extensive public scrutiny and are considered by public health officials to be appropriate for the prevention of indoor heat illness. This policy is based on the new standards.

CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS DURING EXTREME HEAT

Departments must identify essential functions consistent with their Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP). Decisions made that affect employee exposure to temperatures described in this policy guidance should be made in conjunction with essential functions. Departments are thus directed to consider critical employees needed to carry out the essential functions, whether they can schedule work earlier or later in the day, reduce work intensity or duration, and whether they can provide adequate “cool-down” areas consistent with this guidance. Departments that are unable to provide the administrative controls (such as those listed above) or engineering controls (such as fans, ventilation, shielding employees from sources of indoor heat) to maintain temperatures at required levels must be able to demonstrate why such controls are infeasible.

GENERAL DEPARTMENTAL REQUIREMENTS

Monitor Temperatures: When indoor temperatures reach 82° Fahrenheit (F), departments must document temperatures where employees are located throughout the day by measuring the temperature. Departments must maintain the ability to measure indoor temperatures using thermometers freely exposed to the air.

Water: Ensure that fresh drinking water is made available to employees free of charge. The water should be located as close as practicable to the areas where employees are working and in indoor cool-down areas. For those locations that are not plumbed or where water is

not continuously supplied, departments must provide employees with at least one quart per employee per hour during their shifts. The frequent consumption of water is encouraged.

Prepare Cool-Down Areas: Identify cool-down areas that can be maintained at less than 82° F for employees to access at all times when indoor temperatures reach 87° F. Cool-down areas should be located as close as practicable to the areas where employees are working and be large enough to accommodate the number of employees that need to use them at any given time. Allow workers who ask for a cool-down rest period to take one and encourage employees to take a preventative cool-down rest in a cool-down area when they feel the need to do so to protect themselves from overheating. Monitor workers taking such rest periods for symptoms of heat-related illness. If an employee exhibits signs or reports symptoms of heat illness while taking a preventative cool-down rest or during a preventative cool-down rest period, the department shall provide appropriate first aid or emergency response. Departments that are unable to maintain cool-down areas when indoor temperatures reach 87° F must determine whether to relocate employees to other buildings, reassign employees to perform appropriate functions within the department, or close the building and send employees home.

Be on the Lookout for Signs of Heat Illness: Communicate with employees on the signs and symptoms of heat illness. Managers and supervisors should be provided with information on how to spot signs of heat illness and trained on an annual basis. Managers and supervisors should monitor employees for signs of heat illness and take appropriate action when indoor temperatures reach 82° F. Symptoms of heat stroke require immediate attention by calling 9-1-1. Symptoms include disorientation, changes in behavior, decreased level of consciousness, staggering, vomiting, or convulsions. The Nurse Triage/Injury Hotline is also available if there are additional questions about heat illness or if someone is beginning to experience symptoms. Call 1-855-850-2249 for immediate advice from a registered nurse. The service is available 24/7.

Allow Employees Newly Assigned to Work in Heat the Time to Acclimate: Employees who are new to an environment may undergo acclimatization as the body adjusts to their new work environment. "Acclimatization" means temporary adaptation of the body to work in the heat that occurs gradually when a person is exposed to it. An employee who has been newly assigned to any of the following work environments must be allowed to acclimate and be closely observed by a supervisor or designee for the first 14 days of employment:

- In a work area where the temperature equals or exceeds 87° F; or
- In a work area where the temperature equals or exceeds 82° F for employees who wear clothing that restricts heat removal.

Acclimatization happens overtime. Thus, employees new to a work environment should be observed cautiously for the first 14 days to ensure they can safely work in a high-heat setting. Acclimatization peaks in most people within four to fourteen days of regular work for at least two hours per day in the heat.

Communicate with employees: Communicate with employees about how to access shade or air-conditioned space and encourage employees to drink water frequently when

temperatures are expected to rise. When indoor temperatures reach 82° Fahrenheit, departments should encourage employees to take a cool down rest of at least five minutes every hour.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROCEDURES

Respond to signs and symptoms of possible heat illness: Departments must respond to signs and symptoms of possible heat illness, including but not limited to first aid measures and how emergency medical services will be provided.

- If a supervisor observes, or any employee reports, any signs or symptoms of heat illness in any employee, the supervisor must take immediate action commensurate with the severity of the illness.
- If the signs or symptoms are indicators of severe heat illness (such as, but not limited to, decreased level of consciousness, staggering, vomiting, disorientation, irrational behavior or convulsions), the supervisor must contact emergency medical services by calling 9-1-1. If non-emergency medical care is needed, the supervisor must arrange for transportation for the employee to seek non-emergency medical care.
- An employee exhibiting signs or symptoms of heat illness shall be monitored and shall not be left alone or sent home without being offered onsite first aid and/or being provided with emergency medical services, including contacting emergency medical services.
- Departments must also ensure that, in the event of an emergency, clear and precise directions to the worksite will be provided as needed to emergency responders.

Ensure effective communication is maintained: Departments must ensure that effective communication by voice, observation, or electronic means is maintained so that employees at the worksite can contact a supervisor or emergency medical services when necessary. An electronic device, such as a cell phone or text messaging device, may be used for this purpose only if reception in the area is reliable. If an electronic device does not furnish reliable communication in the work area, the department must ensure a means of summoning emergency medical services.

LEAVE GUIDANCE

The City must remain open for business and continue to carry out its essential functions to the public. Should departments be unable to provide cool-down areas consistent with the indoor-heat response procedures below, are unable to reassign non-critical employees to alternate locations that are cooler, or to approve telecommuting schedules consistent with the City's Telecommute Policy, employees may be sent home. In these situations, employees will continue to be paid for the remainder of their shift. In the event employees are instructed not to return to work for additional days, the Department of Human Resources will issue further leave and compensation guidance.

A.1: INDOOR HEAT RESPONSE PROCEDURES

Indoor Temperature	Actions
Below 82°F	No action needed
82-86°F	<p>Required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate with employees on the signs and symptoms of heat illness • Provide a cool down area that is maintained below 82°F • Allow and encourage employees to take a preventative cool-down rest in a cool-down area when they feel the need to do so to protect them from overheating • If the outdoors is cooler, make sure employees stay in shaded areas • Ensure employees have access to adequate drinking water (at least 1 quart per employee per hour) and encourage employees to drink water frequently • Observe employees for signs of heat illness and ensure that they take cool down breaks or seek medical attention as appropriate (see addendum for more information on the signs of heat illness) <p>Recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reschedule or limit strenuous work if possible • Relocate employees to cooler locations or allow telecommuting, consistent with the City’s telecommuting policy
87°F+	<p>Required (all of the above, plus):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record temperatures as soon as you suspect it is above 87°F and again during what is expected to be the hottest part of the day • Provide scheduled cooldown breaks every hour and/or provide Personal Protective Equipment to address heat <p>Recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider sending home non-critical employees
100°F+	<p>Recommended (all of the above, plus):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send home non-critical employees if relocation to a cooler area is not possible • Closely monitor remaining employees for signs and symptoms of heat illness