

# **MARIPOSA COUNTY HEAT ILLNESS PREVENTION PLAN**

## **POLICY**

Mariposa County ("County"), through its management, is committed to the safety and health of all employees and recognizes the need to comply with regulations governing injury and accident prevention and employee safety.

## **PURPOSE**

The Heat Illness Prevention Plan is the County's procedures to establish an organized approach to employee heat illness prevention that will help protect the safety of County employees, and meet the requirements of Title 8 California Code of Regulations, Section 3395 (8CCR3395).

## **PROCEDURES FOR PROVISION OF WATER**

The County's procedures for the provision of water include the following:

- Five-gallon drinking water containers are provided on the County's trucks for the employees. Each container is filled with water prior to leaving the yard for field work location. Each container is for a crew of two, and provides the drinking water for their shift at their work location.
- Disposable cups and the necessary cup dispensers are available to the employees and are kept clean until used.
- As part of the Effective Replenishment Procedures, the water level of all containers will be checked at least every two hours, and more frequently when the temperature rises. Water containers will be refilled with cool water, when the water level within a container drops below about 50 percent.
- Water will be fresh, pure, and suitably cool and provided to employees free of charge. Supervisors will visually examine the water and pour some on their skin to insure that the water is suitably cool.
- During hot weather, the water must be cooler than the ambient temperature but not so cool as to cause discomfort.
- All water containers will be kept in sanitary condition. Water from non-approved or non-tested water sources (e.g., untested wells) is not acceptable. If hoses or connections are used, they must be governmentally approved for potable drinking water systems, as shown on the manufactures label.
- When the temperature exceeds or is expected to exceed 80°F, brief 'tailgate' meetings will be held each morning to review with employees the importance of drinking water, the number and schedule of water and rest breaks, and the signs and symptoms of heat illness.
- When the temperature equals or exceeds 95°F or during a heat wave, pre-shift meetings before the commencement of work to encourage employees to drink plenty of water, and remind employees of their right to take a cool-down rest

when necessary will be conducted. Additionally, the number of water breaks will be increased. Supervisors will lead by example, and employees will be reminded throughout the work shift to drink water.

- Individual water containers or bottled water provided to workers will be adequately identified to eliminate the possibility of drinking from a co-workers container or bottle.

## **PROCEDURES FOR ACCESS TO SHADE**

The County's procedures for access to shade include the following:

- The County's vehicles are equipped with air conditioning. The vehicles may be used for shaded break areas as long as the air conditioning is running. The vehicles may also be used to return to the employee(s)'s base for breaks and lunch.
- Shade is also available by access to outlying County buildings, and provided by access to tree-shaded areas at some work locations.
- During daily work briefings, employees will be reminded of the importance of using shade, air-conditioned vehicles, or indoor locations for their breaks and lunch, and will be encouraged to take at least a five minute cool-down rest every hour when temperatures exceed 80°F.
- An employee who takes a preventative cool-down rest break will be monitored and asked if he/she is experiencing symptoms of heat illness and in no case will the employee be ordered back to work until signs or symptoms of heat illness have abated. Please refer to on Emergency Response for additional information.

## **PROCEDURES FOR MONITORING THE WEATHER**

The County's procedures for monitoring the weather include the following:

- Each supervisor is trained and instructed to check in advance the extended weather forecast. Weather forecasts will be checked with the aid of the internet; for example, [www.weather.gov](http://www.weather.gov), or weather.com, or accuweather.com. Alternatively, weather forecasts can be checked by calling the National Weather Service at (559) 584-3752, or by checking the Weather Channel TV Network.
- The work schedule will be planned in advance, taking into consideration whether high temperatures or a heat wave are forecasted. This type of advance planning will take place throughout the summer season (i.e., May through September).
- Prior to each workday, the forecasted temperature and humidity for the worksite will be reviewed and will be compared against the National Weather Service Heat Index to evaluate the risk level for heat illness. Determination will be made of whether or not workers will be exposed at a temperature and humidity characterized as either "extreme caution" or "extreme danger" for heat illnesses. It is important to note that the temperature at which these warnings occur must be lowered as much as 15°F if the employees are working in direct sunlight.
- During the work shift, the supervisors will monitor the weather through internet

access as indicated above, to determine when it will be necessary to make modifications to the work schedule; for example, stopping work early, rescheduling the job, working at night or during the cooler hours of the day, and/or increasing the number of water and rest breaks.

- In the event that forecasted temperature will equal or exceed 95°F, additional preventive measures such as the High Heat Procedures will be implemented.

## **PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING A HEAT WAVE**

For purposes of this section only, “heat wave” means any day in which the predicted high temperature for the day will be at least 80°F **and** at least 10°F higher than the average high daily temperature in the preceding five days.

The County’s procedures for handling a heat wave include the following:

- During a heat wave or heat spike, the work day will be cut short or rescheduled for work in the cooler hours.
- During a heat wave or heat spike, and before starting work, tailgate meetings will be held to review the County’s Heat Illness Prevention Plan, the weather forecast and emergency response.
- If schedule modifications are not possible, employees will be provided with an increased number of water and rest breaks and will be observed closely for signs and symptoms of heat illness.
- Each employee will be assigned a “buddy” to be on the lookout for signs and symptoms of heat illness and to ensure that emergency procedures are initiated when someone displays possible signs or symptoms of heat illness.

## **PROCEDURES FOR HIGH HEAT**

These are additional preventive measures that the County will implement when the temperature equals or exceeds 95°F:

- Direct communication by voice with a buddy and direct observation, mandatory buddy system, and electronic communication will be maintained, so that employees at the worksite can contact a supervisor when necessary if there are any signs and symptoms of heat illness.
- Frequent communication will be maintained with employees working by themselves via cell phone or two-way radio to be on the lookout for possible symptoms of heat illness. The employee(s) will be contacted regularly and as frequently as possible throughout the day, since an employee in distress may not be able to summon help on his or her own.
- If a supervisor, designated observer, or any employee reports any signs or symptoms of heat illness in any employee, the supervisor or designated person will take immediate action commensurate with the severity of the illness. Please refer to the section on Emergency Response for additional information.
- Employees will be reminded constantly throughout the work shift to drink plenty of water and take preventative cool-down rest break when needed.

## **PROCEDURES FOR ACCLIMATIZATION**

The body needs time to adapt when temperatures rise suddenly, and an employee risks heat illness by not taking it easy when a heat wave strikes or when starting a new job that exposes the employee to heat to which the employee's body hasn't yet adjusted. Acclimatization is this adaptation process, and takes about 7-14 days to be fully realized.

Inadequate acclimatization can be significantly more perilous in conditions of high heat and physical stress. Employers are responsible for the working conditions of their employees, and they must act effectively when conditions result in sudden exposure to heat to which their employees are not accustomed.

The County's procedures for handling a heat wave include the following:

- The weather will be monitored daily. The supervisor will be on the lookout for sudden heat wave(s), or increases in temperatures to which employees haven't been exposed for several weeks or longer.
- New employees, or those employees who have been newly assigned to a high heat area, will be closely observed by the supervisor or designee for the first 14 days.
- The intensity of the work will be lessened during a two-week break-in period (such as scheduling slower paced, less physically demanding work during the hot parts of the day and the heaviest work activities during the cooler parts of the day (early-morning or evening). Steps taken to lessen the intensity of the workload for new employees will be documented.
- The supervisor, or designee, will be extra-vigilant with new employees and stay alert to the presence of heat related symptoms.
- New employees will be assigned a "buddy" or experienced coworker to watch each other closely for discomfort or symptoms of heat illness.
- During a heat wave, all employees will be observed closely (or maintain frequent communication via phone or radio), to be on the lookout for possible symptoms of heat illness.
- Employees and supervisors will be trained on the importance of acclimatization, how it is developed and how these procedures address it.

## **PROCEDURES FOR EMERGENCY RESPONSE**

The County's procedures for emergency response related to heat exposure and possible heat illness include the following:

- Prior to assigning a crew to a remote work location, employees will be review a map of the area to avoid a delay of emergency medical services in the event directions to their work location need to be provided.

- Prior to assigning a crew to a remote work location, efforts will be made to ensure that a qualified and appropriately trained and equipped person is available at the site to render first aid if necessary.
- All employees and supervisors will carry cell phones or other means of communication, to ensure that emergency medical services can be called. Checks will be made to ensure that these electronic devices are functional prior to each shift.
- When an employee is showing symptoms of possible heat illness, call for emergency medical services and immediately take steps to keep the stricken employee cool and comfortable to reduce the progression to more serious illness. Under no circumstances will the affected employee be left unattended.
- During a heat wave or hot temperatures, workers will be reminded and encouraged to immediately report to their supervisor any signs or symptoms they are experiencing.
- Employees and supervisors training will include every detail of these written emergency procedures.

## **PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING A SICK EMPLOYEE**

The County's procedures for handling a sick employee include the following:

- When an employee displays possible signs or symptoms of heat illness, an employee or supervisor trained in first aid will check the sick employee and determine whether resting in the shade and drinking cool water will suffice or if emergency medical services needs to be called. A sick worker will not be left alone in the shade, as he or she can take a turn for the worse!
- When an employee displays possible signs or symptoms of heat illness and no employee or supervisor trained in first aid is available at the work location, then emergency medical services will be called.
- Emergency medical services will be called immediately if an employee displays signs or symptoms of heat illness (decreased level of consciousness, staggering, vomiting, disorientation, irrational behavior, incoherent speech, convulsions, red and hot face, does not look OK, and/or does not get better after drinking cool water and resting in the shade.
- While the ambulance is in route, first aid will be initiated (cool the worker: place the worker in the shade, remove excess layers of clothing, place ice pack in the armpits and groin area and fan the victim). Do not let a sick worker leave the site, as they can get lost or die before reaching a hospital!

## **PROCEDURES FOR EMPLOYEE AND SUPERVISOR TRAINING**

To be effective, training must be understood by employees and given in a language the employees understand. The County will maintain records of the training showing the date of training, the name of the instructor, a list of attendees, and the subject(s) covered. Training records will be maintained as specified in the County's Injury and Illness Prevention Program.

The County's procedures for employee and supervisor training include the following:

- Supervisors will be trained prior to being assigned to supervise other workers. Training will include the County's written procedures and the steps supervisors will follow when employees' exhibit symptoms consistent with heat illness.
- Supervisors will be trained on their responsibility to provide water, shade, cool-down rest breaks, and access to first aid as well as the employees' right to exercise their rights under this standard without retaliation.
- Supervisors will be trained in appropriate first aid and/or emergency responses to different types of heat illness, and in addition, that heat illness may progress quickly from mild symptoms and signs to serious and life threatening illness.
- Supervisors will be trained on the procedures for tracking the weather. Supervisors will be instructed on, how weather information will be used to modify work schedules, to increase number of water and rest breaks or cease work early if necessary.
- All employees and supervisors will be trained prior to working outside. Training will include all aspects of implementing this Heat Illness Prevention Plan and the written procedures it covers on providing sufficient water, providing access to shade, high-heat procedures, emergency response procedures, and acclimatization.
- Employees will be trained on the steps that will be followed for contacting emergency medical services, how clear and precise directions to the work location will be provided, and the importance of making visual contact with emergency responders at the nearest road or landmark to direct them to their work location.
- When the temperature is expected to exceed 80 degrees Fahrenheit, short 'tailgate' meetings will be held to review the weather report, to reinforce heat illness prevention with all employees, to provide reminders to drink water frequently, to inform them that shade can be made available upon request, and to remind them to be on the lookout for signs and symptoms of heat illness.
- New employees will be assigned a "buddy" or experienced coworker to ensure that they understand the training and follow the County's procedures.

Signed by,

  
Chairperson, Mariposa County Board of Supervisors

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