



# NORTHERN CALIFORNIA CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION

July 26, 2024

## **CAL/OSHA INDOOR HEAT RULE APPROVED**

California's indoor heat illness prevention regulations were approved on July 23, 2024, by the Office of Administrative Law (OAL). This new regulation goes into effect immediately.

California already has a [heat rule in place for outdoor work activities](#). This [new standard](#) would expand the current rules by covering, indoor workplaces where temperatures exceed 87 degrees Fahrenheit. All work areas that are not indoor are considered outdoor and are covered by [Cal/OSHA's existing outdoor heat illness preventing program](#).

### **Overview of the Rule:**

The new rule requires employers at indoor worksites to maintain a Heat Illness Prevention Plan, requiring access to cool-down areas, emergency response procedures, and provision of water.

Cal/OSHA defines "*indoor places of employment*" as spaces that are "*under a ceiling or overhead covering that restricts airflow and that are enclosed along the entire perimeter by walls, doors, windows, dividers, or other physical barriers that restrict airflow, whether open or closed.*"

Generally, any workplace with a roof and enclosed sides is considered an indoor workplace.

Cal/OSHA defines "*Cool-down area*" as an "*indoor or outdoor area that is blocked from direct sunlight and shielded from other high radiant heat sources to the extent feasible and is either open to the air or provided with ventilation or cooling.*" The temperature in indoor cool-down areas shall be maintained at less than 82 degrees Fahrenheit, unless the employer demonstrates it is infeasible.

The rule mirrors the outdoor heat illness prevention requirements which require employers to provide access to potable drinking water.

Specifically, this heat illness rule applies to all indoor work areas in the following scenarios:

- The temperature equals or exceeds 87 degrees Fahrenheit when employees are present.
- The heat index equals or exceeds 87 degrees Fahrenheit when employees are present.
- Employees wear clothing that restricts heat removal, and the temperature equals or exceeds 82 degrees Fahrenheit. "*Clothing that restricts heat removal*" means full-body clothing covering the arms, legs, and torso that is waterproof; or designed to protect the

wearer from a chemical, biological, physical, radiological, or fire hazard; or designed to protect the wearer or the work process from contamination.

- Employees work in a high-radiant-heat area and the temperature equals or exceeds 82 degrees Fahrenheit.

This new standard does not apply in the following scenarios:

- Incidental heat exposures where an employee is exposed to temperatures at or above 82 degrees and below 95 degrees Fahrenheit for less than 15 minutes in any 60-minute period (the exception does not apply to vehicles without effective and functioning air-conditioning).
- Employees who telework from a location outside of employer's control.
- Emergency operations directly involved in the protection of life or property.

Much of the indoor heat illness prevention standard mirrors the current outdoor standard, especially as it pertains to rest periods, access to cool-down areas, emergency response procedures, and training. As such, training on the indoor standard can be conducted simultaneously with training on outdoor heat illness prevention.

Further, the rule requires a written plan that can be incorporated into an employer's injury and illness prevention program. The outdoor and indoor heat illness prevention plans can be integrated as one.

One notable difference between the current outdoor and proposed indoor standards: under the new indoor rule, employers must now measure the temperature and heat index and record whichever is greater whenever the temperature or heat index reaches 87 degrees Fahrenheit (or the temperature reaches 82 degrees for workers working in clothing that restricts heat removal or high-radiant-heat areas).

According to Cal/OSHA's [Frequently Asked Questions](#), the temperature can be measured with a thermometer that is freely exposed to the air but shielded from radiant heat sources, such as the sun, hot objects, hot surfaces, hot liquids, and fire. This air temperature must be measured in the immediate area where workers are located and recorded in degrees Fahrenheit.

### **More Information:**

Educational materials and resources include:

- [Cal/OSHA Heat Illness Prevention webpage](#)
- [Heat Illness Prevention in Indoor Places of Employment Regulation](#)
- [Indoor Heat Illness Prevention Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#)
- [Combined Indoor and Outdoor Heat Illness Prevention Model Plan for Employers](#)
- [Indoor Heat Illness Prevention Fact Sheet for Employers](#)
- [Indoor Heat Illness Prevention webpage](#)
- [Comparison Chart of Indoor and Outdoor Heat Illness Prevention Standards](#)