

OSHA Safety Cornerstones Newsletter

A newsletter of practical compliance and safety tips provided by Proudfit Insurance

OSHA Teams with National Weather Service to Protect Outdoor Workers from Heat-related Illnesses

OSHA and the National Weather Service are teaming up again to prevent heat-related deaths and illnesses. Record-breaking heat the past two years has increased the number of heat-related injuries and fatalities in outdoor workers. In 2011, 4,420 workers experienced heat illnesses and 61 workers died, according to Bureau of Labor Statistics data.

For people working outdoors in hot weather, both air temperature and humidity affect how hot they feel. The "heat index" is a single value that takes both temperature and humidity into account. The higher the heat index, the hotter the weather feels, since sweat does not readily evaporate and cool the skin. The heat index is a better measure than air temperature alone for estimating the risk to workers from environmental heat sources.

OSHA does not have a specific standard that covers working in hot environments. Nonetheless, under the OSH Act, employers have a duty to protect workers from recognized serious hazards in the workplace, including heat-related hazards. Workers performing strenuous activity, workers using heavy or non-breathable protective clothing, and workers who are new to an outdoor job need additional precautions beyond those warranted by heat index alone.

IN THIS ISSUE

OSHA Teams with National Weather Service to Protect Outdoor Workers from Heat-related Illnesses

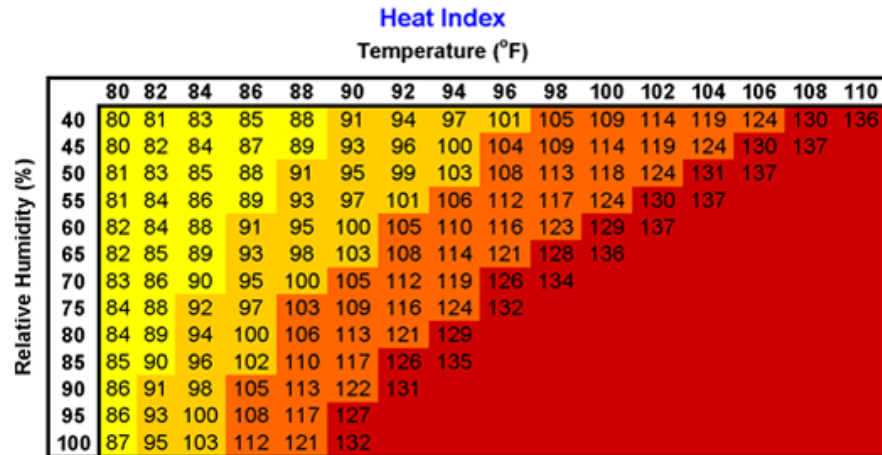
Familiarize yourself and your employees with the heat index to avoid heat-related illnesses.

OSHA Expands Digger Derrick Exemption to Telecommunications Industry

Learn about the exemption that went effective on June 28, 2013.

OSHA's New Isocyanates Program

The program will aim to reduce occupational illnesses and deaths in industries that handle isocyanates.



Likelihood of Heat Disorders with Prolonged Exposure or Strenuous Activity

Caution
 Extreme Caution
 Danger
 Extreme Danger

OSHA Expands Digger Derrick Exemption to Telecommunications Industry

On May 28, 2013, OSHA issued a final rule expanding the current exemption from OSHA standards for certain digger derricks. The exemption, which originally applied to digger derricks in the electric-utility industry, will apply to digger derricks in the telecommunications industry as well. The expanded exemption is effective on **June 28, 2013**.

A digger derrick—also known as a radial boom derrick—is a specialized piece of equipment used to install utility poles. A typical digger derrick includes augers to drill holes for the poles and a hydraulic boom to lift and set the poles. These machines can also be used to lift other objects, so companies frequently use them to place objects, such as transformers, on utility poles and for general lifting purposes at work sites.

The exemption specifically excludes digger derricks from the Cranes and Derricks in Construction rule when they are used for:

- Making holes for poles carrying electric and telecommunication lines;
- Placing and removing poles carrying electric and telecommunication lines;
- Handling materials that need to be installed or removed from poles carrying electric and telecommunication lines; and
- Any other work subject to 29 U.S.C. 1926 Subpart V (Power Transmission and Distribution).

However, digger derricks in the electric-utility and telecommunication industries are still subject to the safety regulations contained in the Telecommunications and Power Transmission and Distribution standards. An employer's failure to follow these standards may disqualify its digger derrick work from the Cranes and Derricks in Construction exemption.



Safety Cornerstones Newsletter

Proudfit Insurance

1385 Washington Road, Suite 105
Washington, PA 15301
724-225-3120
www.proudfit.com

OSHA announces new program for occupational exposure to isocyanates

OSHA recently announced a new National Emphasis Program (NEP) to protect workers from the serious health effects of occupational exposure to isocyanates. Through this NEP, OSHA will focus on workplaces in general, construction and maritime industries that use isocyanate compounds in an effort to reduce occupational illnesses and deaths.

Isocyanates are chemicals that can cause occupational asthma, cancer and irritation of the skin, eyes, nose and throat. Deaths have occurred due to both asthma and hypersensitivity pneumonitis from isocyanate exposure. Respiratory illnesses can also be caused by isocyanate exposure. Isocyanates are used in materials including paints, varnishes, building insulation and auto body repair materials. Jobs that involve exposure to isocyanates include spray-on polyurethane manufacturing, products such as mattresses and car seats and protective coatings for truck beds, boats and decks.

Download OSHA's Heat Safety Tool to keep workers safe

When you're working in the heat, safety comes first. With the OSHA Heat Safety Tool, you have vital safety information available whenever and wherever you need it—right on your mobile phone.

The app allows workers and supervisors to calculate the heat index for their work site, and, based on the heat index, displays a risk level to outdoor workers. Then, with a simple click, you can get reminders about the protective measures that should be taken at that risk level to protect workers from heat-related illness.

For more information about safety while working in the heat, see OSHA's [heat illness Web page](#), including new [online guidance](#) about using the heat index to protect workers. [Download the app](#) directly from OSHA's website.

OSHA cites Florida utility company for serious trenching violations

OSHA has cited Gulf Coast Utility Contractors LLC with two willful and two serious safety violations with proposed penalties totaling \$106,400 for exposing workers to a cave-in and other hazards while they were installing underground utilities at a job site in Panama City Beach.

Two willful violations, with \$98,000 in proposed penalties, involve failing to provide workers with protection against cave-in hazards while working in a trench greater than 5 feet in depth. Two serious violations, with penalties totaling \$8,400, were cited because the employer failed to provide hard hats or a ladder to workers entering and exiting the excavation site, thus exposing them to struck-by and fall hazards.

OSHA standards mandate that all excavations 5 feet or deeper be protected against collapse. Detailed information on trenching and excavation hazards is available [on OSHA's website](#).

© 2013 Zywave, Inc. This publication is for informational purposes only. It is not intended to be exhaustive nor should any discussion or opinions be construed as compliance or legal advice.