Outdoor/Indoor Heat-Related Hazards: Occupational Safety and Health Administration Announces Updated National Emphasis Program

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The Occupational Safety and Health Administration ("OSHA") announced in an April 10th news release that it was updating a National Emphasis Program ("NEP") for:

Outdoor and Indoor Heat-Related Hazards ("NEP").

See Directive Number: CPL 03-00-024.

OSHA NEPs are temporary programs that focus its resources on particular hazards on what it believes are high-hazard industries. Existing and potential new NEPs are evaluated by OSHA using inspection data, injury and illness data, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health reports, peer-reviewed literature, analysis of inspection findings, and other available information sources.

Outdoor/Indoor Heat-Related Hazards NEP's purpose has been described as protecting:

… protect employees from heat-related hazards and resulting injuries and illnesses in outdoor and indoor workplaces in general industry, construction, maritime, and agriculture.

The NEP when issued was stated to expand on OSHA's ongoing heat-related illness prevention initiative by setting forth what it stated was a targeted enforcement component and reiterating compliance assistance and outreach efforts.

The objective of the approach has been described as encouraging early interventions by employers to prevent illnesses and deaths among workers during high heat conditions. Early interventions are stated to include, but are not limited to, implementing:

- Hydration.
- Rest.
- Shade.
- Training.
- Acclimatization procedures for new or returning employees.

Significant changes from the original NEP to the revised NEP are identified as including:

- Updated target industries using current data from BLS and OSHA (Appendix A)
- Removed outdated background information and references
- Updated links

- Revised inspection goal
- Reorganized and Added Appendix I: Evaluation of a Heat Program
- Reorganized and Added Appendix J: Citation Guidance
- Added coding for Worksite Assistance
- Added coding for Unprogrammed Emphasis Hazards

A copy of the NEP can be found here.