

## OSHA Guidance on Preventing Heat-Related Illness and Deaths

Heat exposure is the leading cause of death among weather-related incidents. According to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics, there have been an average of 35 fatalities per year caused by heat-related illnesses. The last 19 years have been some of the hottest on record and with millions of workers across the U.S. being exposed to heat in the workplace. With the increasing frequency and intensity of heat waves, it is imperative that employers take action to protect workers.

In April of this year, [OSHA released an Instruction](#) on the implementation of a National Emphasis Program (NEP) for outdoor and indoor heat-related hazards. The Instruction outlines policies and procedures on implementing an NEP to protect workers from heat-related injuries and illnesses. These new measures are an expansion of OSHA's ongoing campaign to prevent heat-related illness, with focus on targeted enforcement and a reiteration of compliance assistance and outreach efforts. Early interventions are encouraged and include implementing water, rest, shade, training, and [acclimatization procedures](#) for new or returning employees.

The [National Emphasis Program](#) targets specific industries expected to have the highest exposures to heat-related hazards. Hazardous heat exposure is not limited to the outdoors. Workers can face heat exposure from strenuous physical activity, heavy and non-breathable work clothes, and indoor heat sources, such as ovens, fires, large appliances.

The OSHA Instruction can be found using [this link](#). Information and resources on heat exposure, including resources for planning and supervision, prevention, and OSHA standards can be found at [osha.gov/heat-exposure](https://www.osha.gov/heat-exposure).



### Is Your Workplace Prepared for the Heat?

- Is there a written program?
- How does the employer monitor ambient temperature(s) and levels of work exertion at the worksite?
- Is there unlimited cool water that was easily accessible to the employees?
- Does the employer require additional breaks for hydration?
- Are there scheduled rest breaks?
- Is there access to a shaded area?
- Does the employer provide time for acclimatization of new and returning workers?
- Is a "buddy" system in place on hot days?
- Are administrative controls used (earlier start times, and employee/job rotation) to limit heat exposures?
- Does the employer provide training on heat illness signs, how to report signs and symptoms, first aid, how to contact emergency personnel, prevention, and the importance of hydration?

## Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers in the Midwest

By [Claudia Corwin, MD, MPH, COM](#), University of Iowa, Occupational Health Clinic, and [Kimberly Dukes, PhD, COM](#), University of Iowa, General Internal Medicine

Migrant and seasonal farmworkers (MSFW) are essential for the national and Midwest farm economy. Their hard labor keeps our farms in operation and food on our tables. Heavy media coverage about the high risk of COVID-19 infections among farmworker communities made more people aware of how dependent we are on farmworkers across the country. Nonetheless, most of us know very little about these workers.

The [National Center for Farmworker Health](#) estimates there are 2.5-3 million agricultural workers in the United States. Within this group, 19% identify as migrant workers while 81% are seasonal workers. In Iowa, the majority of these workers are members of Spanish-speaking communities from Mexico and Texas. This year, Iowa Workforce Development anticipates the arrival of approximately 5,000 H-2A visa guest workers during

this agricultural season, nearly all of whom will be Spanish-speaking Latino/a/x workers.

Many will travel several days on buses and vans to their employment destinations, then immediately begin long days of physical labor in the heat. They may experience a multitude of occupational exposures and hazards including dehydration, pesticide exposure and musculoskeletal injuries. Many workers will be at higher risk for illness due to poorly treated or untreated medical conditions such as high blood pressure or diabetes.

While in the Midwest, workers often live in crowded congregate housing that includes shared bathrooms and communal meal settings. Transportation to and from the fields is often provided with large, poorly ventilated buses. Crowding contributes to an increased risk of transmissible disease.

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### Resources for Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers

**Proteus** is a Human Resources and Services Administration funded, primarily mobile, federally qualified community health center that has developed long-standing trusted relationships with farmworkers and farm employers across the state. For over 40 years Proteus has been providing bilingual primary care to migrant and seasonal farmworkers in Iowa. In addition to providing affordable health care, the Proteus model is centered on support related to multiple social determinants of health. This includes job training, safety training, education development and food assistance over a larger tri-state region that includes Iowa, Nebraska and Indiana.

While addressing the day-to-day needs of a critical sector of the Iowa agricultural workforce, Proteus has been a valued partner on several University of Iowa College of Public Health and Carver College of Medicine MSFW research and intervention-based projects.

- Engaging Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers in Health Research about COVID-19 and Vaccination: The use of a university developed texting application to gather health access and mental health information from MSFW.
- Vaccination Attitudes among Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers: A survey regarding vaccine attitudes and interest on obtaining the COVID-19 vaccine as well as other vaccines.
- Covid-19 Experiences and Vaccination Attitudes among Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers: A qualitative study to explore individual experiences with COVID-19 and the impact on worker's ability to work and accessibility of healthcare.
- Heat-related illness in midwestern Hispanic farmworkers: A descriptive analysis of hydration status and reported symptoms: A UI College of Nursing collaboration in which Proteus assisted with participant recruitment and researchers referred workers for heat-related medical care.
- Collaboration with Iowa's Center for Agricultural Safety and Health (I-CASH): Sharing best practices for providing agricultural workers with access to health promotion and safety training.

The University of Iowa and Proteus staff plan to continue working together on behalf of farmworkers in Iowa and adjoining states. These community engaged collaborations will continue to collect data, inform policy, and advocate for migrant and seasonal farmworkers who help sustain Iowa's agricultural economy.



### Occupational Hearing Conservationist Certification Course

The Heartland Center is a sponsor of CAOHC-Approved **Hearing Conservationist Certification and Recertification Courses** with course director, Laura Kauth. The hybrid courses provide online instruction via Zoom and a face-to-face day of hands-on, practical training.

**Certification Course:** August 22 - August 26

**Recertification Course:** September 12 - September 14



## Registration is Open for Hawkeye on Safety!

The Hawkeye on Safety annual conference provides life-saving health and safety information to workers from all industries. The conference gives essential training to the professionals responsible for workplace health and safety with a unique focus on providing practical training to rank-and-file workers, so that they can become safety leaders in their workplaces and communities. Join us September 8th in Coralville, IA for a safety event that you don't want to miss!

Registration is just \$45, or \$35 per person for groups of 10 or more. Conference information and registration can be found at [HawkeyeOnSafety.com](http://HawkeyeOnSafety.com).

Hawkeye on Safety is made possible by the sponsors and exhibitors who financially support this conference. If your company is interested in sponsoring or exhibiting at Hawkeye on Safety, please see the HOS [sponsor page](#) to learn more.

## Free Excavation and Trench Safety Webinar

**June 28 at 4:00 PM Central**

June is Trench Safety Month! Join us for the second Hawkeye on Safety webinar of 2022. Drew Caulfied from Iowa Laborers Education and Training Fund will be presenting on [Excavation and Trench Safety](#) on June 28th at 4:00 PM.

[Register for the webinar today.](#)



## Continuing Education Programs

Check out the Heartland Center's online events calendar at [HeartlandERC.org](http://HeartlandERC.org) to keep track of our upcoming continuing education events.

Follow the Heartland Center on social media for regular occupational health and safety updates:



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## Congratulations to the Graduating Heartland Center Trainees!

Ashley Anderson - MS, Industrial Hygiene  
Rebecca Hertges - MS, Industrial Hygiene  
Jacob Johnson - MS, Industrial Hygiene  
Liam Metzcus - MS, Agricultural Safety & Health  
Lexi Pratt - PhD, Industrial Hygiene

Anna Proctor - MS, Agricultural Safety & Health  
Skylar Romasanta - MS, Industrial Hygiene  
Kelsey Strandberg - MS, Industrial Hygiene  
Katelyn Tincher - MS, Industrial Hygiene  
Hannah White - MS, Industrial Hygiene