

EMPLOYER

AND

NATIONAL UNION OF WORKERS

HOT WEATHER AGREEMENT 2009-2010

LONG VERSION 17 DECEMBER 2009



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Hot weather is a health and safety issue. The temperature, humidity, air movement and radiant heat are all factors that can contribute to potential heat stress.
- 1.2 Other important environmental and personal factors that may increase the risk of hot weather stress include, clothing, including protective clothing and personal protective equipment, how physical the work may be , number of hours worked, level of fluid loss and replacement and sources of radiant (mechanical and occupational) heat.
- 1.3 The combined effects of heat and high humidity may increase the level of discomfort. Relative humidity in the range of 40% to 65% is generally the most comfortable.
- 1.4 All factors need to be considered when assessing and controlling risks in hot weather.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose is to have an agreement on measures to prevent hot weather stress.

3. Scope

- 3.1 This Hot Weather Agreement will cover all employees represented by the NUW Enterprise Agreement.

4. Consultation

- 4.1 This Agreement has been jointly developed with elected NUW representatives (organiser, union delegate and OHS reps) on behalf of employees.
- 4.2 Management will continue to consult with elected NUW representatives on implementing this Agreement.

5. Disputes

- 5.1 Any disputes with this Agreement shall be resolved in accordance with the procedure outlined in the NUW Enterprise Agreement.

6. Provision of information for working in hot weather

- 6.1 Provide information, education and awareness for all employees on:
 - The conditions that place people most at risk;
 - How to identify heat related illnesses and the treatment required;
 - How to identify and report hot workplaces;
 - How to work safely in hot weather.
- 6.2 Provide a flyer with information on this Agreement and on how to identify symptoms of hot weather stress, report problems and on agreed controls to all new employees as part of their induction.

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- 6.2 Provide information posters on notice boards about how to identify symptoms of hot weather stress, report problems and on any agreed controls.
- 6.3 Union delegates and OHS reps and management representatives will be provided with information and educational support to assist in the implementation of this Agreement.
- 6.4 First Aiders, Management representatives, employee representatives will be trained on hot weather stress by a trainer, familiar with health issues associated with working in hot weather.
- 6.5 Where rotation of workers is used, appropriate skills and training should be provided to ensure they are able to carry out those tasks.

7. Responsibilities of Employees

- 7.1 Follow this Agreement.
- 7.2 Familiarise themselves with symptoms of heat illness, and follow recommended actions to prevent risk of heat exhaustion, or heat stroke.
- 7.3 Report any situations where any person has been affected by heat or where they may have become dehydrated.
- 7.4 Report conditions which are hot.
- 7.5 Maintain fluid levels and eat sensibly (e.g. drink less coffee, tea).
- 7.6 Minimise sources of heat, e.g. turning off engines when not in use.

8. Responsibilities of Manager/Supervisor

- 8.1 Follow this Agreement as a primary responsibility of their work.
- 8.2 Ensure all personnel in their area of responsibility have been trained in, understand and comply with the requirements of this Agreement.
- 8.3 Check temperature readings in consultation with OHS reps in identified work areas.
- 8.4 Ensure all personnel working in identified warm/humid areas are provided with adequate cool water for drinking.
- 8.5 Check on the hot weather safety of all personnel at regular intervals.
- 8.6 Report all cases of heat related illness and ensure persons are provided with necessary medical assistance.
- 8.7 Encourage employees to frequently take small drinks to maintain fluids on hot days.

9. Hot Weather (Stress) Control Measures

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- 9.1 The best temperature range for thermal comfort has been found to be 19°C to 30°C.
- 9.2 Risk factors must be identified & controlled.
- 9.3 Where the temperature at work exceeds 29°Celsius, measures should begin to be taken immediately to prevent the onset of heat stress.
- 9.4 Hot weather can be defined as being indoor temperatures above 29 degrees Celsius.
- 9.5 The hierarchy of control should be followed by providing cooling to lower working temperatures to remove the danger of excessive heat.

9.1 Engineering controls

- 9.1.1 The most effective control measure is to have air conditioning.
- 9.1.2 If this is not possible then cool work areas by some or all of the following:
- Ventilation/ mechanical cooling methods, e.g. air circulating fans;
 - Insulation of roofs and walls of the work place;
 - Insulating or shielding sources of radiant heat, e.g. insulation around ovens, furnaces or other sources of radiant heat; and/or insulated barriers between hotter and cooler parts of the workplace;
 - Exhaust ducts for venting hot air from the work place,
 - Plant shade trees.
- 9.13 Increase outdoor airflow into areas where heat builds up as a result of hot processes, to cool temperatures closer to outdoor temperatures.

9.2 Administrative Controls

- 9.2.1 If engineering controls cannot be immediately provided then apply a combination of administrative measures:
- Rest breaks;
 - Rotate job tasks between working 'hotter' and 'cooler' tasks;
 - Rotate tasks requiring long periods of standing with tasks performed while seated or provide more regular rest periods for workers standing in hot conditions for long periods (may cause blood pooling in the lower limbs);
 - Reschedule harder physical work to the cooler part of the day;
 - Reduce work rates and/or work pace in hot conditions;
 - Run hot plant (e.g. ovens) at cooler parts of the day;
- 9.2.2 Make arrangements for people working afternoon shift or night shift as the workplace is most likely to remain hot.
- 9.2.3 For outdoor working environments provide suitable clothing, hats, sunglasses, sun cream and use of air-conditioned work vehicles.

8.3 Workplace Amenities for Hot Weather

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Drinking water

- 9.3.1 Feeling thirsty indicates that dehydration is already occurring, an ongoing supply of cooled, clean and palatable drinking water must be readily accessible at all times and be separate from sanitary facilities.
- 9.3.2 Workers must be able to frequently drink the equivalent of a glass of water (where possible every 15 to 30 minutes).
- 9.3.4 Where a connection to a permanent water supply is not possible, drinking water may be provided by other means such as a flask, cooled drink dispenser or water bag.
- 9.3.5 Fluids should be drunk regularly before, during and after working in the heat in order to prevent dehydration.
- 9.3.6 To facilitate access to drinks, workers should be able to obtain water from a refrigerated drink fountain located within 30 meters of where they are working, or additional containers of iced water should be made available for the anticipated 30 to 35 working days when temperatures would be above 29 degrees Celsius.

Lunch/rest rooms

- 9.3.7 Provide a cool, comfortable lunch and/or rest room/ first aid room with temperature range between 18 -26°C.
- 9.3.8 When temperatures are so high as to present a serious risk, work should cease.

10. Rest Breaks for Hot Weather

ACTU Recommended rest breaks for working in hot weather around Australia			
Southern Areas		Northern Areas	
Duration of paid rest breaks within each hour when the temperature reaches and/or exceeds temperatures shown	Temp Degrees Celsius temperate - northern	Duration of paid rest breaks within each hour when the temperature reaches and/or exceeds temperatures shown	Temp Degrees Celsius temperate - northern
10 minutes	30 - 32° C	10 minutes	32 - 34° C
20 minutes	32 - 34° C	20 minutes	34 - 36° C
30 minutes	34 - 36° C	30 minutes	36 - 38° C
cease working	36° C & over	cease working	38° C & over

- 10.1 Consider variations to suit local conditions or climatic variations in each state, or address specific risk factors, specific industries, working conditions or circumstances.
- 10.2 Outdoor work will require rest breaks and stop work to be initiated at lower temperatures where escape from the elements may be difficult or impossible.
- 10.3 Rest breaks should be taken in a cooler area, such as the canteen.

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- 10.4 Where a normal scheduled break such as a tea break occurs within a given hour period when temperatures have reached an action level requiring a break, then the normal 10 minute break should be extended to a 15 minute break.
- 10.5 Alternative activities such as training can be arranged in cooler locations for when temperatures monitored indicate excessive heat stress requiring work to cease for one or more categories of workers.
- 10.6 No worker should work continuously for more than 1 hour and 15 minutes where temperatures indicate rest breaks are required.

11. Checking the workplace

- 11.1 Check weather forecast to plan working arrangements when hot conditions are expected.
- 11.2 The temperature in the workplace should be checked throughout the day and measured as close to identified work areas and/or equipment as possible.
- 11.3 To measure temperature use a digital normal, dry bulb, thermometer or where there is high humidity levels use a digital wet bulb globe thermometer (WBGT).(The WBGT measures humidity, temperature, and air movement).
- 11.4 Temperature and humidity readings are to be taken from various locations determined around the site.
- 11.5 The thermometer should be checked each hour on the hour on very warm to hot days where the temperature is anticipated to reach 29 degrees Celsius (or be humid and 27 degrees Celsius),
- 11.6 Thermometers will be calibrated annually by maintenance prior to the hot weather season.
- 11.9 Ensure documents relating to temperature adjustments arising from the calibration of thermometers is accessible at each thermometer location.
- 11.10 When weather forecasts predict temperatures reach 29 degrees Celsius then hourly readings of thermometers, on the hour, should be carried out by the nominated person (manager) in consultation with OHS reps.
- 11.11 Temperature readings should be logged on forms located near to thermometers.
- 11.12 In consultation with union delegates and OHS reps establish rotation plans for each work area before the onset of hot weather.

12. First aid

- 12.1 Where any worker experiences heat stress associated symptoms they shall report to the First Aider or Supervisor, and find a cooler location to recover such as the first Aid room, or canteen.

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12.2 Such incidents will be recorded in accordance with the Injury Reporting Procedures, ensuring the OH&S Representative is aware of the incidence and involved in developing any preventative actions.

13. Review

13.1 This Hot weather Agreement will be reviewed as part of the NUW Enterprise Agreement.

14. SIGNATORIES

**BRANCH SECRETARY
NATIONAL UNION OF WORKERS
833 Bourke Street, Docklands VIC 3008**

DATE:

**NAME
TITLE
EMPLOYER
Address**

DATE: