

Western Fleet Auto Brokers

285 W. Shaw # 102 Fresno, CA 93704

- HOME
- NEWS
- SPORTS
- ENTERTAINMENT
- CLASSIFIEDS
- OPINION
- BEEHIVE

Emergency proposals stress safety in the heat

State submits plan following five heat-linked deaths this month.

By Dennis Pollock / The Fresno Bee

(Updated Saturday, July 30, 2005, 6:24 AM)

Emergency regulations to prevent heat-related deaths and illness were submitted Friday to state regulators.

The proposed rules follow five deaths in California this month that were either confirmed or possibly heat-related, according to the state Division of Occupational Safety and Health.

Two of the deaths occurred on farms in Kern County, one was in a melon field near Huron and another at a Fresno construction site. A fifth occurred in El Centro.

The emergency regulations focus on actions that can be taken immediately by employers and workers to address heat stress.

"These emergency regulations are a historic breakthrough for farmworkers," said Arturo Rodriguez, president of the United Farm Workers. "It is tragic that farmworkers had to die before government took action. But Gov. Schwarzenegger has done what three previous governors didn't do — he, Sen. Dean Florez and Assembly Member Judy Chu [D-Monterey Park] took action, and we applaud them."

Chu's proposed Assembly Bill 805 is aimed at protecting farmworkers from heat stress. Florez held a "Meeting in the Sun" on Thursday in Shafter to call attention to the issue.

Barry Bedwell, president of the California Grape and Tree Fruit League in Fresno, said he was "gratified the administration has acted in a timely manner."

"These regulations apply to all employees outdoors, a basic point that has to be understood," he said. "The sun does not play favorites."

Manuel Cunha Jr., president of the Nisei Farmers League in Fresno, said he believes the proposals are "a workable set of regulations. This gives some clarity on the heat-stress issue for growers, construction people and others."

Chu called the proposals "a really good first step."



A farmworker wears a bandana to shield himself from the sun in the plum harvest in Goshen. Emergency rules now before state regulators would aim to protect farmworkers and other employees from heat stress.

Richard Darby / The Fresno Bee

[E-mail story](#)

[Print story](#)

[Subscribe to print](#)

[Click to comment](#)

TOP JOBS

SALES - AFLAC has FT & PT sales position...

Dancers/Exotic \$5-10k/mo CASH BONUS \$300...

...

APT. MAINTENANCE TECHNICIAN Large reside...

RETAIL Merchandisers. PT. To service mag...

COOK/DIETARY AIDE P/T & on-call. Exp pre...

Production Workers A Worldwide leader in...

NURSING HINDS HOSPICE A CALL TO SERVE Do...

SALES 3 prof'l salespeople needed now. C...

WAREHOUSE/DISTRIBUTION FT, top pay, cle...

APT Managers/Leasing Exp'd self-motivate...

Sales - Local Sales Manager Responsible ...

CONSTRUCTION Superintendent For comm'l w...

LAW SHERIFF'S BAILIFF (Salary: \$2610-\$31...

DRIVER FIND THE HERO WITHIN Your dedicat...

DRIVER Fresno Company needs energetic pe...

CONSTRUCTION Line Striping Supervisors a...

MEDICAL SJVR is continuing to grow! If y...

SALES Sr. Sales Professional Exp/Req: Mi...

SALES The #1 Spanish Language Radio Stat...



Get your tickets for the 2005 season NOW!

2005

She said the only missing element from her bill was "recovery periods," proposed periodic breaks on the hour when temperatures reach certain thresholds.

She said her legislation, already approved in the Assembly, will move forward, and, she added, there is no guarantee permanent regulations will be developed.

Florez said, "There are and always will be some bad actors in every industry, but with these new regulations will come tangible consequences for those who continue to mistreat their workers and put their lives in jeopardy."

OSHA officials Friday submitted the proposed emergency regulations to the state Occupational Safety and Health Standards Board.

The board is expected to meet in early August to vote on the emergency regulations. Once approved, they will be in effect for 120 days, at which time they will lapse if the board does not adopt them as permanent regulations.

The proposed regulations would:

Require education of employees and supervisors likely to be exposed to heat stress on how to prevent heat-related illness and what to do should it occur.

Reiterate existing law requiring water to be available at all times, and ensure that workers understand the importance of drinking water frequently.

Require that access to a shaded area is available to any worker suffering from heat illness or needing shade to prevent the onset of illness.

Require the board to review, by no later than Jan. 1, the feasibility of providing shade for rest periods for outdoor employment.

"With two months left in the heat season, it is imperative that action be taken immediately to protect those who work outside," said John Rea, director of the Department of Industrial Relations. "Among the provisions of the regulations, the real key is education for both employees and supervisors. The best way to battle heat illness is to avoid it in the first place, and proper education helps achieve that goal."

Those whose deaths focused added attention on heat stress included:

Salud Zamudio Rodriguez, a 43-year-old fieldworker who died while harvesting bell peppers July 13 near Arvin.

Ramon Hernandez, 42, who was found dead in a melon field near Huron on July 15.

Gonzolo Chavez Jr., a laborer who was found dead at a golf course construction site near Marks Avenue and Kearney Boulevard in Fresno on July 19.

Augustine Gudino, 42, of Visalia, whose body was found in a Kern County vineyard July 21.

Eduardo Martinez Morales, a 48-year-old plasterer, who collapsed and died at a job site in El Centro.

"When temperatures rise, the hundreds of thousands of Californians who work in the fields, on construction sites and outdoors under the sun face the risk of heat-related illnesses," Schwarzenegger said. "The regulations released today will make an immediate difference by providing training and other steps that both employers and employees can take to prevent these injuries."

The Division of Occupational Safety and Health is already educating employers and workers on how to avoid heat stress. It has launched a campaign that includes an advisory bulletin, a Spanish-language radio blitz and a Web page outlining preventive measures.

The reporter can be reached at dpollock@fresnobee.com or (559) 441-6364.

FresnoBee.com

THE McCLATCHY COMPANY

© 2005, The Fresno Bee
[News](#) | [Sports](#) | [Business](#) | [Classifieds](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Text Only](#) | [Subscribe](#)

[Your Privacy](#) | [User Agreement](#) | [Child Protection](#)