

Hot in the Vineyard – Now What?

Eastern Washington is experiencing a near-record heat wave along with our record drought -- lucky us. However, we cannot stop working or tending to the vines* just because it's hot, plus it's often unsafe to perform these tasks at night when it would be cooler. Certainly, starting work at first light and avoiding the hottest part of the day is prudent scheduling, but what else should or could you be doing?

First, you should be aware that the State of Washington has a standard in place for protection of workers from outdoor heat exposure (WAC 296-62-095; available online through 7 webpages starting at [this link](#)). In short, once the outdoor temperature exceeds 89 degrees (or less with extra protective gear on), employers are required to be taking action such as ensuring workers have ready access to drinking water (potable water that is suitable to drink, up to a quart per employee per hour), encouraging them to drink, and ensuring adequate provisions for cooling off. The protection standard also includes State-mandated training requirements for employees and supervisors.

Second, you should have in place a heat stress program that implements the standard, including drinking water, employee monitoring, procedures to relieve employees from duty if showing signs or symptoms of heat-related illness, emergency response (including cooling and access to medical facilities), and training.

Act now and help workers do their jobs safely in the heat.

Notes for Oregon and Idaho

- Oregon and Idaho do not have heat stress standards; they fall under OSHA's [General Duty Clause](#) for providing a safe workplace.
- Oregon has specific requirements for "Field Sanitation for Hand Labor Work," including drinking water, found at [437-004-1110](#).
- The ACGIH[®] TLVs[®] for heat stress are considered a good standard of care.

About Us

Dade Moeller is a full service Safety and Health firm located in Richland, Washington. We provide a complete suite of safety and industrial hygiene services, including safety program development as described at www.dademoeller.com.

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**Heat stress applies to all outdoor work activities, not just viticulture.*