



OH&S Bulletin

December 2008

BEAT THE HEAT

Summer is upon us again, which means protecting yourself from one of the biggest risks – **a boss who tries to force you to work in extreme heat.**

Working in excessive heat is a clear breach of the *OH&S Act*, the National Building Construction Industry Award and your EBA.

HEAT ILLNESS

Heat illness is a **real and immediate threat**, especially when doing manual and outdoor work, which can lead to skin rashes, dehydration, heat cramps, heat exhaustion, heat stress **and even death.**

Heat also increases the risk of injuries and interacts with other workplace hazards, aggravates existing medical conditions and has been known to adversely affect sperm quality.

THE RULES

The *OH&S Act 2004* requires that heat illness hazards at work need to be addressed, assessed and effectively controlled in a manner that provides the highest level of protection¹.

The CFMEU EBA clause 33.9.5 states: "At temperatures below 35°C workers are not to be relocated ... **UNLESS** the work environment creates a serious risk to their health and safety..."

YOUR HEALTH, YOUR SAY

The Act also states that the employer must consult with workers and/or their OHS rep over all OH&S issues, including an agreed heat policy. Issues to consider when your site OHS committee is coming up with a heat policy are:

- The type of work being performed
- Sun glare
- The agreed weather station where the temperature is to be taken from
- Radiant heat from particular surfaces
- Relocation of workers out of direct sunlight and into cooler shaded areas
- Air-conditioned sheds for rest periods

¹ Section 4 of *OH&S Act 2004* (Vic)

If your workplace doesn't have a heat policy now is the time to get one implemented. If you are still in any doubt, call the CFMEU for assistance on 03) 9341 3444